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**THE POETICAL WORKS OF
HEINRICH HEINE**

**VOL. III
G E R M A N Y
R O M A N C E R O
BOOKS I & II**

THE POETICAL WORKS OF HEINRICH HEINE

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THE POETICAL WORKS OF
HEINRICH HEINE

VOL. III

GERMANY
ROMANCERO

BOOKS I & II

TRANSLATED BY
MARGARET ARMOUR



LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1917

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

I was able in 1890 to persuade the late Charles Godfrey Leland to undertake the translation of the complete works of Heinrich Heine. The plan was to divide them into twelve volumes, and he did actually accomplish the work of translating the first eight volumes, viz. those containing the prose. The last four volumes he did not live to finish, and it has been an anxious matter for me to find a translator or translators worthy to complete an undertaking which always seemed to me very admirably begun by Mr. Leland. I hope I have succeeded in finding two translators who are not unworthy to complete his task. Unfortunately the author of the version of "The Book of Songs" also died without being able himself to see the sheets through the press. If there are any shortcomings in his work therefore, they must not be laid too severely at his door. The last three volumes are being done by Margaret Armour (Mrs. W. B. Macdougall), and I have every confidence in presenting her work as that of a most highly-gifted poetical translator.

WM. HEINEMANN.

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GERMANY:
A WINTER'S TALE.

(WRITTEN IN JANUARY 1844.)

GERMANY :
A WINTER'S TALE.
(1844.)

DEPARTURE FROM PARIS.

PARIS, adieu, beloved town,
To-day I turn a rover,
And leave you happy here behind,
With pleasure brimming over.

My German heart has fallen sick—
Within my breast I feel it—
And in the North the doctor dwells
Whose skill alone can heal it.

He's famous for his wondrous cures,
To health he'll soon restore me,
But drastic are his bitter drugs ;
I shrink from what's before me.

Farewell, ye merry folk of France,
My brothers happy-hearted ;
Though foolish yearning drives me forth,
We shall not long be parted.

Imagine ! For the smell of peat
I long with real anguish ;
For turnips, Lüneburger cakes
And sauer-kraut I languish.

I yearn for watchmen, councillors,
Black bread in all its crudeness,
For tobacco, parsons' daughters blonde—
I even yearn for rudeness.

I long to see my mother, too ;—
I frankly own I'm human—
'Tis fully thirteen years since last
I saw the dear old woman.

Farewell, my wife, my lovely wife ;
I must perplex and grieve you—
So close I fold you to my heart,
Yet, none the less, I leave you.

With this terrible thirst that drives me far
From bliss, I dare not trifle ;
I feel I must fill my lungs once more
With German air, or stifle.

In convulsive throes this pain would end—
This wild impetuous burning—
My foot, to tread on German ground,
Quivers and shakes with yearning.

By the end of the year, completely cured
Of this malady most unpleasant,
I'll be back, I promise, in time to buy
The loveliest New Year's present.

CAPUT I.

When I crossed from France to Germany
'Twas the mournful month and dreary
When November winds are stripping bare
The forests worn and weary.

As we drew towards the boundary
I felt my pulses leaping
Within my bosom for delight;
I think I started weeping.

And when I heard the German tongue,
'Twas with such curious gladness
I seemed to feel my heart's blood ebb
Without regret or sadness.

A little maiden with a harp
Entuned a common ditty ;
The voice was false, but the pathos true ;
It touched my heart to pity.

She sang of love and lovers' woes,
Of loss, and fates that sever,
Of meetings in a better land
Where grief is purged for ever.

She sang our mortal vale of tears,
The joys that end in sadness,
The world where souls, redeemed at last,
Attain eternal gladness.

She sang the epopee of heaven,
The song of loss and sighing,
With which they lull the populace,
Big booby ! when it's crying.

I know the song, the text, and the men
Who wrote the song, and taught her ;
I know that in private they drank their wine,
And preached in public water.

I will write you a new, a sweeter song ;
You shall sing it without a quaver ;
We will build the kingdom of heaven on earth—
'Tis a better plan and a braver.

We shall then be happy and starve no more :
We whom the earth was spoiled for ;
No longer shall lazy bellies waste
What busy hands have toiled for.

Oh, here below there's not only food
In abundance for every comer,
But beauty and pleasure and lollipops,
And the myrtle and rose of summer.

The sugar plums, as soon as they're ripe,
Shall to each and all be given,
And angels and sparrows may have our share
Of the vague delights of heaven.

And if after death our wings should sprout,
We'll pay you a visit with pleasure,
And help you to eat your tarts and cakes,
And similar laid up treasure.

As sweet as the viol and flute shall ring
My song, when that other's supplanted.
The passing bell shall be tolled no more,
Nor the *Miserere* chanted.

To the Genius of Freedom, Europe, the Maid,
Her virgin heart has yielded ;
They have plighted their troth, and, heart on heart,
With a first fond kiss have sealed it.

And a wedding true it will be, though the priest
May pronounce no blessing hollow.
Long live the bridegroom and the bride,
And the children that shall follow !

Oh, a wedding song is this new song ;
There's gladness in every line there ;
And stars, at the Holy Sacrament,
Arise in my soul, and shine there.

They are rapturous stars that blaze and pass
In streams of flame and wonder—
I feel such vigour in my blood
I could split the oaks asunder.

For, now I have stepped on German sod,
A magic sap steals through me ;
The giant has touched his mother again,
And her love and her strength renew me.

CAPUT II.

While thus the maiden trilled and strummed,
The joys of heaven forestalling,
My box the Prussian douaniers
Were carefully overhauling.

They poked among handkerchiefs, shirts, and hose ;
They rummaged in likely places ;
They were nosing about for prohibited books,
And jewelry and laces.

Ye fools, who turn my boxes out,
There's nothing there forbidden ;
The contraband I travel with,
In my head is safely hidden !

You will find neither Mechlin nor Brussels lace,
'Tis with what's in my head I trick you ;
I warrant, were I to unpack my point,
It would prettily tease and prick you !

I carry the royal diamonds there
Of the Future, and need not falter :
The gems of the new, the unknown God,
That shall blaze upon his altar.

Oh, many a book I have stowed away ;
I am speaking in moderation
When I tell you my brain is a warbling nest
Of books for confiscation.

Believe me, in Satan's library
Not one is worse or stranger ;
Hoffmann von Fallersleben's own
Are not so fraught with danger.

A traveller standing by remarked
We had reached the chain of duties
Known as the Prussian Zollverein,
And enlarged upon its beauties.

"By the Zollverein," he went on to say,
"Our national life is founded,
And our poor divided Fatherland
To one whole at last is rounded.

"The Zollverein gives a unity
Which is obvious and real;
The unity born of the censorship
Is the deeper, the ideal.

"The censorship unifies thought and soul.
What we want—and the goal is sighted—
Is a Germany welded to one great whole,
Without, within, united."

CAPUT III.

Carolus Magnus at Aix-la-Chapelle
Lies entombed in the minster hoary.
You must not confound him with Charles Mayer,
Of poetic and Swabian glory.

Oh, sooner than lie in the minster at Aix,
A Kaiser dead for ever,
The poorest of poets at Stukkert I'd live,
Beside the Neckar river.

At Aix the very dogs are sick
Of the general air of inaction.
"Come, tramp on us, stranger," they seem to say,
" 'Twould serve as a slight distraction."

I strolled for an hour in this wearisome hole,
And managed to bore myself greatly;
Had a look at the Prussian soldiers again:
They have altered but little lately.

They are wearing still the old grey cloak;
The high red collar I noted.
(The red betokens the blood of France—
Kórner's the poet quoted.)

They're the same old wooden pedantic folk.
With none of your airy graces;
Rectangular, rigid at every turn,
With frozen, gloomy faces.

Decked out, and stiff on the same old stilts,
And bolt upright, you meet them;
Exactly as if they had swallowed the cane
That once was used to beat them.

The ferule has never quite passed away ;
They carry it now inside them ;
The "thou" of the present recalls the "he,"
When their masters used to chide them.

Their moustache is also but one of the modes
Which time, while it keeps, transposes :
The pigtail which formerly hung at their back
Now hangs in front from their noses.

The cavalry uniform credit reflects
On the man of taste who designed it ;
The helmet struck me as specially good,
With the steel peak rising behind it.

It recalls, with its air of chivalry,
Mediaeval lays romantic,
Mistress Joanna of Montfaucon,
Baron Fouqué, Uhland, Tieck.

It recalls the mediæval squires
Whom poetry harps so much on ;
Who carried undying faith in their hearts,
And on their backs a scutcheon.

It reminds one of tourneys and crusades,
Of love and service lowly ;
Of an age when newspapers were not yet—
An age unprinted, holy.

Yes, yes, the helmet is all I could ask—
'Tis a fancy exceedingly pretty ;
A kingly conception in every way—
Full of point with its peak—quite witty !

I am only afraid when the thunder rolls,
And the sky is ablaze with levin,
Your romantic heads will be apt to attract
The up-to-date lightning of heaven.

And in war time, too, you must buy for your wear
Something lighter ; those helmets might hamper
Your heads with their mediæval weight,
When you take to your heels and scamper.

At Aix-la-Chapelle, on the post-house sign,
I saw once more, indignant,
The bird I detest ; from its poisonous eye
It threw me a glance malignant.

O horrible bird ! If into my hands
You fell for any reason,
I would pluck out your feathers and hack off your
claws,
And a fig for the bogey treason !

I would stick you up on an airy perch
Where the winds were blowing cold, then,
And summon sharpshooters in haste from the Rhine
To the shooting-match I'd hold, then.

Oh, a sceptre and crown I would give the man
Who that bird to earth should bring, then.
A fanfare of trumpets we'd lustily blow,
And shout "Long live the king!" then.

CAPUT IV.

When I reached Cologne and heard the Rhine,
The dark was already falling.
I felt the effect of the German air—
In an appetite appalling.

On omelettes and ham I gladly supped,
And, seeing the ham so salt was,
I was driven of course to drink Rhine wine;
The bacon alone at fault was.

The Rhine wine sparkles golden still,
In the green, familiar rummer;
But, drink in excess, and your nose will flame
To the flaunting hue of summer,

And will tickle and prick, and tease you so,
'Twill provoke your nails to malice;
I was forced to go out and stroll in the dusk
Through the echoing streets and alleys.

The stone-built houses looked down as if fain
To tell me the vanished story
Of old Cologne, the sacred town—
Its annals and legends hoary.

Once a pious priesthood spent its days,
To godly living schooled, here,
And, according to Ulrich von Hutten's tale,
The *virī obscuri* ruled here.

Mediæval monks and nuns here danced
Through their cancan's lewd gyrations.
Hoogstraten, Cologne's grim Menzel, in gall
Here wrote his denunciations.

Round books and men the devouring flames
Of the pyre here leapt and panted,
While the loud and solemn bell was tolled,
And the Kyrie Eleison chanted.

Stupidity here, in the open street,
Like a dog with malice mated ;
Religious intolerance still is the mark
Of its brood, and wrath unsated.

And see! in the pallid light of the moon,
A shape colossal towering!
'Tis Cologne's great minster against the sky
Like a devil darkly lowering.

It was built to be the mind's Bastille;
The hope that the Papists cherished
Was that German thought, imprisoned there,
Would languish till it perished.

But Luther arrived with his thundering "Halt!"—
Cried out on their hope, and killed it.
The cathedral stands as it stood that day;
Complete, they will never build it.

It will never be finished—and that is well;
For thus, in its baulked ambition,
As a monument of our German strength,
It fulfils a Protestant mission.

The bells on your charity-bags may ring;
You will fail, though you even solicit
From Jews and heretics shameless alms;
'Tis an idle dream—dismiss it.

In vain for this object the great Franz Liszt
May give concerts justly lauded,
And a talented king declaim himself hoarse,
By a loyal people applauded.

The cathedral will never be built to an end;
Though the Swabian fools have striven
To help to that consummation accurst,
By the shipload of stones they've given.

It will never be finished, however loud
May clamour the owl and raven—
Those mediævally-minded birds
Who house in the steeple's haven.

Nay, more than that, the time will come—
I speak no foolish fable—
When the minster, far from achieving your dream,
Will be used as a common stable.

Then where shall we put—'tis a puzzle indeed
To decide what the proper course is—
The Holy Three Kings of the Morning Land,
When the minster's a stable for horses?

I have frequently heard the question asked;
But the Holy Three Kings, when we rout them,
Will easily find some other home;
No need to trouble about them.

You can stow them away in Münster town,
Each in an iron basket—
In the three that hang on Saint Lambeth's Church—
That's my advice if you ask it.

And if one of the holy triumvirate
Should be missing, then take another;
Replace the king of the morning land
With an occidental brother.

CAPUT V.

And when I reached the bridge I saw,
Where the bastion guards the river,
The waves of Father Rhine below
In the quiet moonlight quiver.

“How has it fared with you, Father Rhine?
Once more I give you greeting.
How often with a wistful heart
I have longed for this hour of meeting!”

Having spoken thus, I heard in the depths
A curious peevish moaning
That sounded like an old man's cough,
Accompanied by groaning.

“Welcome, my boy; for your kindly thoughts
In exile I am grateful.
We have not met for thirteen years—
Disastrous years and fateful.

“At Biberich I have swallowed stones.
The taste was vile, yet worse is
What heavier on my stomach lies—
One Niklas Becker's verses.

"To hear him sing you would certainly think
That I was some virgin speckless,
Who had guarded from every thieving hand
Her crown of honour fleckless.

"I have been so mad when I heard them shout
That song the fool wrote round me,
That I've almost torn my old white beard,
In myself have almost drowned me.

"The French could tell a truer tale:
Quite another sort of story.
They knew how often they fouled my waves
While marching on to glory.

"The silly song and the silly man!
He has shamefully stigmatized me,
And, for all I know, in politics
He may even have compromised me.

"How shall I face the French again,
My cheek with shame thus burning?
I who so often have prayed to Heaven
With tears for their returning!

"I was always fond of the little men—
Such gallant, gay carousers!
Do they sing and spring as they used to do,
And wear those funny white trousers?

“I should like so much to see them again,
But I hardly dare to, after
That ridiculous, stupid, accursed song;
I confess I fear their laughter.

“Why, Alfred de Musset may come, you know,
That gutter-snipe of the city;
And, marching ahead of them, drum me deaf
With his insolence vile but witty.”

Thus poor old Father Rhine complained;
It made me sad to hear him.
I answered with many soothing words,
And did my best to cheer him.

“Father Rhine, you need not fear the French;
Their tongue no longer itches
To jest and gibe; they’re completely changed.
They’ve discarded the funny white breeches.

“The ones they are wearing now are red,
With different buttons; they wander
Unsing, unspring, grow duller each day,
And hang their heads and ponder.

“Kant, Fichte, and Hegel are names one hears
They philosophize and they think now.
They play at skittles and smoke their pipes,
And beer is all the drink now.

"They will soon be worse Philistines far than ourselves,

So much have things altered. Voltaire now
Has hardly a single disciple left ;
'Tis by Hengstenberg they swear now.

"It is true that Alfred de Musset is still
A gutter-snipe, and a witty one ;
But we'll see that we give him as good as we get,
Though our answer may not be a pretty one.

"Yes, if he comes drumming his wretched jokes,
We'll whistle him back his measure ;
We'll whistle him tunes of the women fair
In whom he finds his pleasure.

"Oh, soon you'll have heard a better song.
Let this silly song not grieve you.
Farewell, we shall shortly meet again,
Though at present I must leave you."

CAPUT VI.

Paganini was always followed about
By a Spiritus Familiaris,
Who was now a dog, and now assumed
The form of the late George Harris.

On Napoleon, at every critical hour,
A man in scarlet waited ;
And Socrates had his demon too—
No vision brain-created.

And I, myself, when at work by night
Have seen, his features hidden
By a sinister mask, behind my chair,
A mysterious guest unbidden.

He had something concealed beneath his cloak,
Which at times, when the light would catch it,
Glinted and gleamed in the strangest way,
Like an executioner's hatchet.

He was square and short, his eyes were as bright
As stars, and as keen as sabres.
He kept his distance, and held his tongue,
And never disturbed my labours.

This singular fellow had vanished for years,
And who would have thought he'd find me
In the town of Cologne, in the moonlit street,
Where he suddenly stood behind me ?

I noted him dogging my every step,
As I sauntered dreamily musing ;
If I stood for a moment he came to a halt,
Like a shadow, without my choosing.

He would stand as if waiting, and when I moved on
Once more, would follow me closely.
And so we reached the Cathedral square,
When I turned at last morosely—

For I found it beyond endurance—and said
With excusable irritation,
“Why doggest thou thus my steps through the night?
I demand an explanation.

“We always meet when my heart is thrilled,
And vast emotions stir it;
When through my brain in splendour flash
The lightnings of the spirit.

“O wherefore is thy gaze so fixed?
With what design intrud'st thou?
And what hast thou gleaming beneath thy cloak?
Who art thou, and what wouldst thou?”

With the utmost coolness he made reply,—
He was even a trifle phlegmatic,—
“Adjure me not, for Heaven's sake,
And please to be less emphatic.

“I am no ghost of an age gone by,
No spectre pale and dusty,
I was never appealed to by rhetoric,
My philosophy's rather rusty.

“Nor am I practical—rather was
For a quiet life and a still meant,
Yet know, that whatever thy soul conceives,
I am charged with its fulfilment.

“The years may drift, but I never rest
Till thy thoughts have been translated
Into deeds. ’Tis thine to think ; I act.
Each does as it was fated.

“In Rome, in advance of the consul they bore
An axe, let me remind thee ;
To-day thou hast thy lictor too,
But the axe is borne behind thee.

“I am thy lictor and walk in thy wake
With the hatchet brightly gleaming.
I am the deed evolved at last
From thy musing and thy dreaming.”

CAPUT VII.

I returned to my inn, and slept as if rocked
To the music of angel-numbers.
One sleeps so soundly on German beds,
On the feathers so softly slumbers.

Of the national bolsters and pillows light
How often I've thought with yearning
When, an exile lone, upon mattresses hard
Through the long night-watches turning.

One sleeps so well on our German beds—
On none can a man dream better.
The German soul feels untrammelled and free
From every mortal fetter.

Untrammelled and free, to the heights of heaven
It wings in lofty soaring.
O German soul, how proud thy flight
When the German body is snoring!

The gods grow pale when they see thee come,
And many a star of even
By the rush and flap of thy mighty wings
Is quenched where it shone in heaven.

To France and Russia the land belongs,
The Britons own the water,
But lords of the realm of dreams are we:
We won it without slaughter.

In the sky we practise hegemony proud:
Develop till none would know us;
Less favoured nations can only evolve
On the flat, dull earth below us.

I fell asleep, and thought in a dream
That up and down I wandered
Once more through the moonlit, echoing streets
Of the holy town and pondered.

Again my attendant, muffled and black,
Strode after, to escort me.
Still on we went, till I grew so tired
That my knees could scarce support me.

And lo! the heart within my breast
Was cut, and gaped asunder.
I felt the red blood streaming down
From the open wound, with wonder.

And often, myself, I know not why,
As we passed a house, I'd linger
To smear the post with the blood of my wound,
In which I dipped my finger.

And every time I marked a house
I heard dread echoes rolling ;
With melancholy note afar
Some passing bell was tolling.

The golden moon grew wan and sad,
And shone more pale in heaven ;
Across her face, like sable steeds,
The tempest-clouds were driven.

And, following at my back, there came
That muffled form and eerie,
With the axe beneath his mantle hid.
I went till I was weary.

I walked till we reached the Cathedral square,
And lo! before I knew it,
I had paused where the door was standing wide,
And, having paused, passed through it.

Silence and death and darkness reigned
In the minster's vasty spaces,
While, to show the gloom, some hanging lamps
Burned low in their dusky places.

I wandered along the pillared aisles ;
No sound save, ringing hollow,
The tread of my faithful friend behind !
I could hear his footsteps follow.

We came at last to a place that shone,
In the taper's glimmer, golden
And bright with gems ; of the Holy Three Kings
'Twas the chapel rich and olden.

But the Holy Three Kings who used to lie
So still in their jewelled prison
Were seated on their sarcophagus,
From their ancient sleep uprisen.

Three skeletons lean in fantastic array,
Their poor yellow skulls still wearing
Their royal crowns, and a sceptre proud
Their bony fingers bearing!

They jerked and moved their long dead bones
Like puppets, stiffly, slowly;
They smelt of decay and rotten dust,
Mingled with incense holy.

And one of them even opened his mouth
And made me a speech, a long one;
He expounded to me his claims to respect:
Thought each of his points a strong one.

The first of the reasons was that he was dead;
That a king he was, the second;
The third that he was a saint; the whole
Of but little account I reckoned.

I answered him merrily, "Vainly you strive
To convince a man who so sage is
That at once he seizes the vital point—
You belong to vanished ages.

"Begone! The deep, forgotten grave
Is the proper place for you now.
Your chapel's treasures belong to life,
And the living claim their due now.

"This sacred roof, in the days to come,
Is decreed by Fate for a stable,
And, should you resist, we'll eject you with clubs
As an obsolete, foolish fable."

Having spoken thus, I turned about,
And saw behind me shining
My dumb companion's dreadful axe.
My wishes straight divining,

He advanced with his fearful axe and smote—
They might have been brick and mortar—
Those skeletons three of a false belief—
He showed them little quarter.

With awful groans the vaulted roof
Re-echoed his axe's thunder ;
The streams of blood from my bosom ran,
And I woke with a start of wonder.

CAPUT VIII.

From Cologne to Hagen some fifteen and six
Is the fare, rather under than over.
The diligence chanced to be full, so I rode
In a special chaise, without cover.

'Twas a late autumn morning both chilly and dull
Through the mud the carriage went wheezing.
But, in spite of the wretched weather and road,
I found it all rather pleasing.

Ah, this is my native air indeed,
By which my hot cheek fanned is,
And this mud of the highway in which I sink
The mud of my Fatherland is!

The horses kept wagging their tails like friends,
As if theirs had always been my road.
Atalanta's apples were not more fair
Than their pellets of dung on the high-road.

We posted through Mühlheim, a pretty town ;
The people are busy and staid there.
In the May of eighteen thirty-one,
I remember, a visit I paid there.

There was bud, then, and blossom on bush and on
bough,
The sunbeams were laughing and winking,
The birds were all singing and yearning in song,
And the people were hoping and thinking,

" These lanky, lean warrior-guests of ours
We shall soon be allowed to fire on.
When they take to their horses their stirrup-cup
We'll pour them from bottles of iron.

And Freedom her banner of red, white and blue
Will wave over dancing and revel ;
She may even fetch Bonaparte up from the grave
In defiance of Death and the Devil."

But alas ! the knights are still to the fore,
And plenty of geese, whose haunches
Were lean as a lathe when they entered the land,
Now go with their jolly round paunches.

Pale as pictures of Faith, Hope, Charity,
Were the dogs when they settled down here ;
But since then they have tipped their noses red
On the goodly wine of our town here.

And freedom has sprained her ankle bone,
And alas ! the revel tarries,
And sadly the tricolor of France
Looks down from the towers of Paris.

The Emperor rose from the dead, 'tis true,
But the English worms had made him
A peaceful and a quiet man,
And again in the tomb they laid him.

I saw the procession, the gilded car ;—
Amid the crowd stood staring ;—
Saw the golden goddess of Victory
The golden coffin bearing.

Up the Champs Elysées, over the snow,
Where the heavy mists hung blinding,
On through the Arc de Triomphe proud
The solemn train came winding.

The musicians' fingers were stiff with cold,
And the music suffered badly ;
The eagles on their standards seemed
To nod me a greeting sadly.

The people looked like so many ghosts,
Lost in their memories hoary ;
Again they dreamed the magic dream
Of world-imperial glory.

I wept that day. I wept when I heard,
From the heart of a loving nation,
The "Vive l'Empereur !" ring out, as of old,
In deathless adoration.

CAPUT IX.

We left Cologne at a quarter to eight—
The start was somewhat early.
When Hagen was reached, where we halted to dine,
It was three o'clock, or nearly.

The table was spread, I was glad to see,
With the good old German dishes.
My sauer-kraut, hail! Your homely smell
As sweet as a man could wish is.

My mother stewed her chestnuts so—
I loved them with childish devotion.
And my native cod-fish, be greeted! How well
You swim in your buttery ocean!

O the Fatherland must be dear to all,
Unless to the heart of dullard!
Of bloaters and eggs I am also fond,
Fried brown and rightly coloured.

How the sausages spluttered for glee in the fat!
Roast fieldfares, like angels rejoicing,
A melodious song from their apple-sauce sang,
The sweetest of welcomes voicing.

“All hail, compatriot! Long you have roamed”
They twittered and warbled together,
“And wandered afar in a foreign land,
With birds of a foreign feather.”

A goose was put down with the other good things,
A creature quiet and kindly;
Perhaps in the days when we both were young,
She had yielded her heart to me blindly.

Her gaze was so wistful and faithful and sad—
I was sorry I could not commend her—
I am willing to vouch for her beautiful soul,
But her body was far from tender.

A boar's head was served on a pewter plate;
'Twas a dish with which none could quarrel.
The snouts of our bores at home, I see,
Are garlanded still with laurel!

CAPUT X.

We had barely left Hagen when darkness fell,
A cold chill struck to my liver—
But, till we reached Unna, and stopped at the inn,
I could only be patient and shiver.

The sweetest of maidens mixed me my punch;
She was friendly and fair as the noonlight.
Her golden locks were like yellow silk,
And her eyes were as soft as moonlight.

'Twas a positive pleasure to hear again
The Westphalian voices speaking.
With memories fond of comrades loved
It set the punch-bowl reeking.

Those dear old friends of the Gottingen days !

How we drank while we were able,
And then how we fell on each other's hearts,
And sank beneath the table !

How I loved those honest Westphalian lads

In the good old times that fled fast—
They were free of all vain ostentation and show,
And always so true and so steadfast !

How squarely and proudly they stood when they fenced !

How gallant their gay defiance !
How fairly they dealt their tierces and quartes,
As they fought with hearts of lions !

They can fight, they can drink, and, when hand-clasps seal

Love's bond, their spirit mellows
And they weep ; they are sentimental oaks,
And the rarest of all good fellows !

May Heaven guard you, gallant race,

And bless your seed ! May your story
Be untroubled alike by war and fame,
By heroes and heroes' glory !

May your sons have luck and always be set

An easy examination !
May your daughters be suitably married betimes !
Amen to my supplication !

CAPUT XI.

This is the forest of Teutoburg
Of which Tacitus has written :
The classic morass where Varus stuck,
And the Roman host was smitten.

By Hermann, the noble Cheruscian prince,
They were beaten, and died inglorious ;
The German nation triumphed here,
And rose from the mud victorious.

Had Hermann and his fair-haired hordes
Met the fate that was the foeman's,
German freedom had never been even a name,
For we had all been Romans.

And Latin customs and speech would have ruled,
In the land that ours by right is.
In Munich we should have had vestals now,
And Swabians called Quirites.

And Hengstenberg, an aruspex wise
Would be raking in bowels of kine now ;
As an augur, Neander be watching the flight
Of birds in search of a sign now.

Birch-Pfeiffer had tippled her turpentine neat,
As the Roman ladies used to.
(More sweetly, they say, those smelt who drank,
And not many, I fancy, refused to).

Our Raumer instead of a German scamp,
Would in Latin have hight *scampatius*,
And Freiligrath would have been writing his verse
Unrhymed, like Flaccus Horatius.

That boorish beggar, Father John,
Would be known as *Boorianus*,
And Massmann, *Me Hercule !* Latin would talk,
As Marcus Tullius Massmanus.

The friends of truth would be fighting no more
With curs in the press ; the arena
They would figure in rather, at mortal grips
With the lion, jackal, hyena.

We should now have had only one, instead
Of six-and-thirty, Neros.
To defy the tyrant's myrmidons
We had opened our veins like heroes.

Our Schelling, known as Seneca,
Would have perished like him. Our dictum
On the works of our own Cornelius had been,
"Cacatum non est pictum."

Thank God! the Romans were put to flight,
And the victory was Hermann's;
Varus succumbed with his legions doomed,
And we remained good Germans.

We're a German folk with a German tongue,
Which will serve its turn, and pass in us;
And the Swabians—well, they are Swabians still,
And an ass is an ass, not *asinus*.

The eagle-order Raumer wears
As scamp, and not *scampatius*;
And Freiligrath writes in his wretched rhyme—
Of a truth he's no Flaccus Horatius.

Massmann, thank God! speaks no Latin at all;
The drama Birch-Pfeiffer's trade is,
And she tipples no nasty turpentine
Like the gallant Roman ladies.

O Hermann, to you we owe it all!
It is right you should be rewarded
With a monument brave at Detmold built.
I myself have subscribed toward it.

CAPUT XII.

The carriage went bumping along in the dark,
And many a jolt it gave one.
Then a sudden crash, and a wheel came loose ;
Our plight was distinctly a grave one.

The postillion dismounted and hastened for help
To the village, and lo ! I found me
Alone in the wood at the dead of night
With a clamour and howl around me.

'Tis the famished wolves that so loudly call
With hunger's voice unsleeping ;
'Tis their fiery eyes that gleam through the shades,
Like the flicker of torches leaping.

The beasts, informed of my coming, no doubt,
Have resolved, by way of ovation,
To sing in my honour their choruses loud,
And provide an illumination.

I see, the song is a serenade—
A very charming notion ;
I strike on the instant an attitude,
And reply with deep emotion :

"I am heartily glad, O brother wolves,
In spite of my demerits,
To hear so much affection howled
From so many noble spirits.

"What my feelings at this moment are
No words could fitly measure.
The memory of this happy hour
I shall for ever treasure.

"I thank you for your confidence,
Which I trust is not mistaken :
For that unswerving loyalty
Which has stood each test unshaken.

"Brother wolves, ye never doubted me,
Were never disconcerted
By the knaves who said that to the dogs
I had secretly deserted :

"That a renegade, in the sheepfold soon
I'd be winning a councillor's glories.
It was quite beneath my dignity
To contradict such stories.

"The sheepskin that at times for warmth
I have hung about my shoulders
Has never made me love the sheep,
However it struck beholders.

“I am neither a sheep, nor a councillor,
Nor a dog, nor a haddock; I never
Was aught but a wolf, my heart and teeth
Are as wolfish and keen as ever.

“A wolf am I, and shall always be
With the wolves a brother yelper.
Yes, count on me, and shift for yourselves,
And God will be your helper.”

Such the extempore speech I made;
With the usual mutilation,
In the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, by Kolb,
It was printed for circulation.

CAPUT XIII.

The sun arose near Paderborn
In a mood of melancholy.
His task indeed is a tiresome one—
To light a world of folly.

For when he has lit the one half up
And is hasting to let his light fall
On the other half, already the first
Is darkening down to nightfall.

Sisyphus' stone keeps rolling back ;
The Danaïds' leaky vessel
Will never be full, and the sun in vain
With the dark will always wrestle.

And lo ! as the early mist dissolved,
And the morning red flamed o'er me,
The form of the Man who was crucified
Appeared on the path before me.

The sight of you always makes me sad,
Unhappy kinsman and dreamer !
Poor fool, who wanted to save the world
And be mankind's Redeemer !

O evilly they entreated you,
Those mighty lords of Jewry !
But why did you speak of Church and State
So regardless of their fury !

Alas ! that the art of printing books
To the world had not been given !
If it had, in a book you had only to air
Your views on the things of heaven.

A censor would then have excised any blame
Of our earth, and avoided friction.
Yes, a careful and loving censorship
Would have saved you from crucifixion.

Had you preached but your Sermon on the Mount
From a text of a different bias !
You had genius and talent enough to know
That one ought to spare the pious !

From the Temple with whips you even chased
The bankers and money-changers.
And now, poor dreamer ! you hang on the cross,
A warning from all such dangers.

CAPUT XIV.

A chill damp wind, and a barren land ;
The chaise jolts through the mire ;
But, ringing and singing, I seem to hear :
“ Sun, thou accusing fire ! ”

’Twas a ballad my old nurse often sang,
On a tale of murder founded ;
The burden was, “ Sun, thou accusing fire ! ”
Like a bugle call it sounded.

The murderer lived in mirth and glee,
And slept on an easy pillow,
Till at last in the wood they found him dead,
Hanged high on a hoary willow.

By the sun convicted, the murderer fell
 Beneath the avenger's ire.
Ottilia, dying, to heaven had screamed,
 "Sun, thou accusing fire!"

And whenever I think of that stirring song,
 And how the burden moved me,
I remember my nurse's wrinkled face,
 And how the dear soul loved me.

Near Münster born, she was quite a mine
 Of ghostly tales and gory,
And many a folksong, too, could sing,
 And legend and ancient story.

How my heart would beat when she told me the woes
 Of the princess, captive holden,
Who sat alone on a desolate waste,
 Her tresses shining golden!

From morn till night she herded geese,
 And when she took her late way
Toward the town and had homed her flock,
 She would pause beside the gateway.

The head of the horse was nailed above,
 Who had borne her, and shared her danger,
When she left her happy home to dwell
 In that cruel land, a stranger.

“O Falada!” oft the maid would sigh,
“That thou shouldst be hanging yonder!”
And the horse would answer, “Alack the day,
That hither thou didst wander!”

“If my mother knew,” the maid would mourn,
“That thus we pine and languish!”
And the head would answer sadly down,
“Her heart would break for anguish!”

I listened with breathless eagerness,
Hoarding each word like a miser,
When she told me the strange, mysterious tale
Of Barbarossa, the Kaiser.

She assured me he was not really dead,
Though learned folk might say so;
With his knights in a mountain he slumbered, hid,
And had dwelt for many a day so.

Kyffhäuser, she said, was the mountain’s name
That he dreed his royal doom in.
’Tis a cave with vaulted chambers high,
Which ghostly lamps illumine.

The first of the rooms is a stable vast,
Where, dight in harness splendid,
Thousands and thousands of horses stand
Above the mangers bended.

They are saddled and bridled, one and all,
But never a neigh gives token
Of life, they stand like statues of iron
In a silence for ever unbroken.

In the second hall the soldiers sleep,
Stretched out in their straw-strewn places :
Thousands of soldiers, bearded and rough,
With bold and warlike faces.

And each is armed from top to toe,
But never a one of the number
Is seen to toss or stir at all ;
They lie in dreamless slumber.

In the third room axes and spears and swords
Are piled in mounting stages,
With helmets and harness, and firearms used
By the Franks of the Middle Ages.

The cannons, though not very numerous, serve
To commemorate fields well holden ;
From the top of the pile a standard flaunts
The colours, black-red-golden.

In the fourth hall dwells the Kaiser himself,
On a chair of stone he is seated ;
By a table of stone, his head on his hand,
He has sat while the ages fled.

His beard is as red as a fiery flame,
That beard which grew so bravely
That it touched the ground ; and now he will move
An eyelid, and now frown gravely.

Is the Kaiser asleep, or lost in thought ?
What boots such vain surmising ?
When comes the appointed hour at last,
He will wake, be sure, and rising,

Will shout on a sudden "To horse ! To horse !"
While his standard he seizes boldly ;
And his warriors, hearing, will spring from the ground
Where they slept so long and so coldly.

They will leap to the saddle, and every horse
Will whinny and paw to be going ;
And they'll gallop away through the echoing world,
With the trumpets lustily blowing.

O boldly they'll ride, and boldly they'll charge,
For their age-long sleep is over.
A stern tribunal the Kaiser will hold,
And the dastardly crime uncover

Of those murderous cowards who cruelly slew
Our virgin of heart's desire,
Young Germany fair with her locks of gold—
"Sun, thou accusing fire !"

And many who laughed and thought themselves safe
Within their lordly castles,
Barbarossa will order his hangman to swing
From the rope, like caitiff vassals.

Oh, sweet my old nurse's tales to recall !
Their beauties never tire.
My superstitious heart exults :
"Sun, thou accusing fire !"

CAPUT XV.

A rain as sharp as needle-points
Falls, icy cold and wetting ;
The horses lash their dispirited tails,
And wade through the puddles, sweating.

The postillion tootles the good old tune —
I know every note that is in it—
"Three riders come galloping out through the gate,"
I grow drowsier every minute.

Then I fell asleep, and lo ! in a dream,
The earth was cleft asunder,
And I stood by Barbarossa's side
In Kyffhäuser's cave of wonder.

But he was not sitting, a statue of stone,
By a stony chair and table ;
Nor did he look quite so worthy of awe
As they picture him in the fable.

He showed me his rooms, and waddled about,
And chatted with intimate pleasure :
Like an antiquarian pointed out
Full many a curious treasure.

In the hall of armour he stopped to explain
How the club should be held and wielded ;
And, using his ermine to polish some swords,
He rubbed till the rust had yielded.

Then he took up a pair of peacock's plumes,
And, adroit of hand, had quickly
Removed from the helmets and coats of mail
The dust that covered them thickly.

"Of the standard," he said, "I am proudest of all ;
Mark the wood ; no worm has gnawed it.
And the silk, I maintain, is as good as new ;
You will find not a moth has flawed it."

When we came to the hall, where the warriors
armed

Lay asleep on their pallets lowly,
The old man said with a roguish grin,
"Hush ! Here we must walk more slowly,

“ And talk in whispers in case they should hear ;
For this, you must know, is a heyday ;
Another hundred years have fled,
And brought us round to pay-day.”

The Kaiser approached with a stealthy foot
His men on their quiet couches,
And slipped a ducat with deft despatch
Into every one of their pouches.

I was greatly astonished and stared in surprise,
But he smirked and explained, “ My plan is
To pay them thus every hundred years ;
The wage a ducat per man is.”

In the hall where steeds by the thousand stood,
Each silent beside its manger,
The Kaiser merrily rubbed his hands—
His manner was even stranger.

He counted them over, one by one,
And poked their ribs, approving ;
He counted and counted, with anxious haste
His eager lips kept moving.

“ The number, alas ! is not yet complete,”
He sighed, his brow grown gloomy.
“ Of soldiers and weapons I’ve more than enough,
But the horses would undo me.

GERMANY.

“ It is true there’s a goodly number there,
And dealers, charged to supply me
With more, are scouring the earth—I want
The best that money can buy me ;

“ But the tale is not yet complete, when it is
I will strike my blow belated
For my Fatherland and my German folk,
That so long have wearily waited.”

The Emperor paused, and I eagerly cried,
“ Nay, strike at once ; time passes.
If horses, old fellow, are all you want,
In their stead you can surely use asses.”

Barbarossa returned, with an easy laugh,
“ As to time, we need not worry.
Rome was not built in a day ; no good
Has ever resulted from hurry.

“ He comes to-morrow who comes not to-day ;
The oak is long in the growing ;
And *chi va piano, va sano* is true
By the Roman proverb’s showing.

CAPUT XVI.

I was roused for a while from uneasy sleep
By the chaise that jolted and lumbered ;
But my lids were heavy, and, dreaming again,
I returned to the cave as I slumbered.

We walked about through the echoing halls
With interest unflagging.
The Kaiser was anxious to hear the news,
And learn how the world was wagging.

Not a rumour had reached him for many a year,
And he begged me to report all ;
Since the Seven Years' War not a single word
Had he heard from a living mortal.

“ What of Karschin and Moses Mendelssohn ? ”
He asked, nor would let me parry
The subject of Louis the Fifteenth's love,
The infamous Dubarry.

“ O Kaiser,” I said, “ you are far behind.
Long dead has been that Moses,
With Rebecca, his wife ; even Abraham,
Their son, in the dust reposes.

“ With Leah, Abraham begat
Felix, a child whose star is
Ascending fast; an orchestra now
He conducts, and famed afar is.

“ Old Karschin has likewise long been dead,
And also Klencke, her daughter;
But Helmine Chezy is living still,
Or so at least I have thought her.

“ As long as Louis the Fifteenth reigned
The Dubarry lived in clover,
And when she was guillotined at last
The best of her life was over.

“ The fifteenth Louis died in his bed.
With the sixteenth, Fate dealt badly;
He perished with Marie Antoinette
By the guillotine most sadly.

“ The queen displayed a courage high:
With royal pride demeaned her;
But Dubarry shrieked and wept aloud
On the day they guillotined her.”

The Kaiser suddenly came to a halt,
And stared and asked my meaning:
“ But explain to me now, for heaven’s sake,
What is this guillotining?”

“ Guillotining is a method new—
Since you force me to instruct you—
That, no matter what your sex or rank,
Will from life to death conduct you.

“ And when this method is employed,
They use a machine invented
By one Guillotin, whose skill in the name
Guillotine is complimented.

“ They strap you tightly to a board,
Then they lower this and shove you
Between two posts—a triangular axe
Is hanging right above you—

“ They pull a cord ; the axe comes down
And gaily chops your head off ;
Your head rolls merrily into a sack,
And your body is carted dead off.”

At this point the Kaiser cut me short ;
“ Enough of your instrument vile, sir !
Forbid it, heaven, that such a machine
My realm should ever defile, sir !

“ The king and his consort strapped to a board !
That any should so forget, sir,
The rudiments of reverence
And courtly etiquette, sir !

“And who are you, that you venture to speak
Of such matters like an equal?
Have a care, my man, or I'll clip your wings;
You will bitterly rue the sequel.

“Your impudence, sirrah, exceeds all bounds.
I am furious, and with reason;
Your very breath's *lèse majesté*
And impious high treason.”

When the fierce old man with insulting words
Gave rein thus to his passion,
I spoke my mind out plump and plain
In no half-hearted fashion.

“You are only a poor old fabled thing,
And that is the truth about you.
Lie down, Barbarossa, and go to sleep;
We shall free our land without you.

“The Republicans, cracking their silly jokes,
Would laugh us to scorn if a spectre
We chose as our leader in Liberty's cause—
A ghost with a crown and sceptre.

“For your standard, too, I have lost my love.
Fools, mad for everything olden,
In my *burschenschaft* days disgusted me quite
With your colours, the black-red-golden.

“ Yes, slumber away in your mountain hid.
Both for us and yourself it were wiser ;
For, now I consider the facts of the case,
We are better without a Kaiser.”

CAPUT XVII.

In a dream we quarrelled, the Kaiser and I ;
’Twas a dream, which my only defence is,
For nobody surely would dare to browbeat
A prince, in his waking senses.

It is only in dream, the ideal realm,
That the German has courage to utter
The German thoughts which, awake, his heart
Is afraid to so much as mutter.

We were driving along by a forest whose trees
Were so uncompromisingly real,
With their sturdy trunks and their barren boughs,
That they checked further flights ideal.

The oaks were reproachfully shaking their heads,
The birches were nodding, “ Fie, fie ! sir.”
And moved by sudden remorse I exclaimed,
“ Forgive me, beloved Kaiser !

“ Forget, Barbarossa, my violent speech ;
I admit that your way is wiser ;
I am only a reckless, impatient fool :
Come quickly, O my Kaiser !

“ If you won’t have the guillotine, stick to the sword
For the necks of the nobles who stumble.
Keep the hangman’s rope for the burgess who slips,
And for Hans in his smock-frock humble.

“ If you’ll only reverse the order at times,
We will change our views to meet yours ;
Now and then hang the knight and the burgess
behead ;
Remember, we’re all God’s creatures.

“ Let the criminal court of Charles the Fifth
Resume its grim vocation ;
Rail off and classify folk by guild
And order and corporation.

“ Restore the Holy Roman realm
In entirety, and encumber
The land with its obfuscated trash
And musty-fusty lumber.

“ To endure the mediæval facts
I fancy I might nerve me ;
But from this wretched mongrel thing
Heaven in its grace preserve me !—

“This pedantic revival of chivalrous times,
That such a nauseous dish is
Of Gothic delusion and modern pose—
That neither flesh nor fish is.

“Shut up the theatres; clear the boards
Of those antics, with their mumming
Who parody thus an age gone by.
O Kaiser, speed your coming!”

CAPUT XVIII.

O Minden is a fortress good,
Armed strongly for resistance!
But from our Prussian fortresses
I like to keep my distance.

We reached the town at fall of night,
The bridge with sullen thunder
Groaned gloomily beneath our wheels,
The moat was yawning under.

The lofty bastions seemed to frown,
A menace in their anger;
The great gate, opening noisily,
Swung to with din and clangour.

I thought, "When Polyphemus closed
The cave with the stone, Ulysses
Was not more sad of soul than I,
Nor in plight more grave than this is."

A corporal stopped us to ask our names.

"I'm an oculist, and as such, sir,
Giants have couched for cataract;
They call me Nobody Much, sir."

Still lower my drooping spirits sank
At the inn; the food distressed me.
I retired to my room but could not sleep,
The blankets' weight oppressed me.

'Twas a yellow canopied feather bed
I stretched my uneasy limbs on,
From which a dirty tassel swung;
The damask curtains were crimson.

Accursed tassel! It robbed me of rest
Till the weary night was ended;
It swung like the sword of Damocles
Above my head suspended.

And now it seemed a serpent's form,
And it hissed, "You'll never win out of it.
You are fast in the fortress, and fast shall bide.
You are doomed and damned—there's no doubt
of it!"

And I moaned and sighed, " Were I only safe
In my home that alas ! so far is—
Free in the Faubourg-Poissonière,
Beside my wife in Paris ! "

Over my brow I felt at times
A curious something stealing ;
'Twas like the censor's chilly hand,
And set my poor brain reeling.

A confused array of white gendarmes
In their shrouds my bed surrounded.
I seemed to hear the clank of chains—
How gruesomely it sounded !

And ah ! the spectres carried me off—
In their clutch they held me surely.
On a steep and awful precipice
They tied me down securely.

And there was that horrible tassel again,
To my dreams so detestably tethered !
But now it had changed to a vulture bold,
Sharp-clawed and sable-feathered.

'Tis the Prussian Eagle, woe is me !
It has gripped me and torn the liver
With its cruel claws from my bleeding breast.
In vain I groan and quiver.

And thus till cock-crow I struggled and writhed
In the dream-bonds fever wove me—
Till I waked in Minden, perspiring in bed
With only a tassel above me.

I hardly dared to draw my breath
Till, posting on, I found me
Safe on the soil of Bückeburg
With the open country round me.

CAPUT XIX.

O Danton, great was your mistake,
And you had cause to rue it;
One can carry one's country away on the soles
Of one's boots—one can certainly do it.

Half of the kingdom of Bückeburg
I bore on my own shoe-leather.
I never saw in all my life
Such shocking roads and weather.

To look at the home whence our family sprang,
At Bückeburg I tarried;
For this was my grandfather's native town;
A Hamburg wife he married.

We arrived in Hanover at noon,
And I spent my time in moving
About the place, when my boots were brushed—
Travel should be improving.

And heavens! how fine and spruce it was!
No mud allowed in the streets here;
Magnificent buildings on every hand—
Imposing piles—one meets here.

I was specially pleased with a spacious square,
Walled round by houses stately.
'Twas here the king in his palace dwelt;
The exterior charmed me greatly.

(Of the palace, I mean.) A sentry-box
Stood on either side the portal.
The redcoats with muskets, keeping guard,
Seemed fierce to a timid mortal.

"This is where Ernest Augustus lives,"
My guide went on expounding;
"A Tory lord of the good old school;
For his age, of a vigour astounding."

"In idyllic safety he houses here,
More secure for the courage lacking
In some whom we know and could easily name
Than for all his guardsmen's backing."

“ I have heard him complain of his dreary post
In a manner to waken one's pity :
Of this office of king he's condemned to fill
In Hanover our city.

“ After English life, he feels ours here
Too narrow and unprogressive ;
He's afraid he will hang himself yet for spleen,
His boredom's so excessive.

“ When I saw him the day before yesterday,
His own royal back was bending
Above the fire while he cooked a draught
For some dogs that needed tending.”

CAPUT XX.

From Harburg to Hamburg we drove in an hour.
The shades of night were thickening ;
The stars of heaven in welcome shone ;
The air was soft and quickening.

When I reached my mother's, the dear thing's joy
Was so great and unexpected
She was almost scared ; she clasped her hands
In rapture unaffected.

"My child! And after thirteen years
Like this again to meet, dear!
You must be hungry; tell me quick,
What will you have to eat, dear?"

"I have fish, cold goose, and oranges
The sweetest you ever tasted."
"Then give me the oranges, fish, and goose,
I promise they won't be wasted."

I ate with a will, and my mother was gay,
But alas! I am no romancer;
She asked me this, and she asked me that,
And her questions were hard to answer.

"My darling child, in your foreign home
Are you carefully served and tended?
Does your wife understand how to keep a house?
Are your shirts and stockings mended?"

"Dear little mother, the fish is good,
But fish is a risky diet;
You so easily choke on a bone if you speak;
Just leave me a moment in quiet."

When the excellent fish had been despatched,
The goose was served up duly,
And my mother began her questions again;
It was awkward to answer truly.

“My darling child! In which country, say,
Has life the greater zest now?
You’ve tried the French and the German both,
And which do you like the best now?”

“Dear mother, this German goose is superb,
But in France a tradition they follow,
When it comes to the stuffing, that’s better than ours,
And in sauces they beat us hollow.”

And after the goose had disappeared
The oranges took their station
Before me in turn, and I found them sweet
Beyond all expectation.

But then my mother began again—
When happy you know how one chatters—
She asked me a thousand things, and touched
On painful and personal matters.

“My child! And what are at present your views?
Is your interest still as hearty
In politics as it used to be?
What is your creed? Your party?”

“Dear little mother, these oranges here
Could certainly not be beaten.
With the greatest enjoyment I suck the juice,
But I leave the rind uneaten.”

CAPUT XXI.

The town, which was half destroyed by fire,
They are building at their leisure.
It looks like a half-shorn poodle now,
Depressing beyond measure.

And many a street has disappeared
That sadly enough one misses.
Where is the house in which I kissed
Love's first and sweetest kisses?

And where has the printing-office gone
Where I printed my *Reisebilder*?
The shop where I tasted oysters first?
How these changes and gaps bewilder.

Where is the Dreckwall? Vanished, alas!
In vain I have reconnoitred;
The Pavilion too, with its tarts and cakes,
Where of old I ate and loitered.

Where is the town-hall where, throned in pride,
The Senate and burgers debated?
A prey to the flames that wrecked and devoured
The holiest things, unsated.

The people are grieving and sighing still,
And telling the dismal story
Of the havoc wrought by the terrible fire
That has shorn their city's glory.

“Nothing but surging flame and smoke—
The fire seized all for plunder !
The steeples roared and blazed to heaven,
And reeled and crashed in thunder.

“The old Exchange with the rest is burnt,
Where our fathers had dealt and traded
For hundreds of years like honest men—
(Or so they were persuaded).

“The bank, the silver soul of the town,
And the books in which is given
The money value of every man—
They are still intact, thank Heaven !

“Thank Heaven too ! even distant lands
Began subscribing to aid us ;
We got four hundred thousand pounds ;
Our misfortunes more than paid us.

“The charity-box was carried round
By pious folk and respected ;
And we never let the left hand know
What the right hand had collected.

“From every country the money flowed in,
And our hands were open to take it :
And food—we welcomed any dole,
Whatever they liked to make it.

“They sent us clothes and bedding enough,
And bread and meat and soups too.
The King of Prussia went so far
As to want to send his troops, too.

“The material loss was covered quite—
’Twas a matter of calculation ;
But alas ! for the awful terror and fright
We shall never have compensation !”

I answered them cheerfully, “Worthy friends,
Stop whining, it only hinders.
Troy in its day was a better town,
And yet it was burnt to cinders.

“Get on with your building, and hold your tongues ;
Get rid of your puddles and mire too.
Provide your city with better laws,
And engines for quenching fire too.

“Your cayenne pepper more sparingly use,
When turtle-soup’s in the question ;
And the carp you cook with its scales in fat
Must be fatal, I fear, to digestion.

“On the whole your turkeys are harmless birds,
But there's risk of grave disaster
From the knavish bird who lays its eggs
In the wig of the burgomaster.

“I need not mention the name of the bird,
But it merits your execration.
Whenever I think of the odious thing
I am sick with indignation.”

CAPUT XXII.

But the people themselves have altered more
Than even the hapless city ;
Like peripatetic ruins they go—
A sight to wake one's pity.

The thin have grown thinner, and fatter the fat,
The children are old and staid now ;
And those that were old are children again,
Dependent on other's aid now.

And many are bullocks who used to be calves
In the days when we sojourned together,
And many a gosling now goes as a goose,
In proud and flaunting feather.

I found old Gudel bedizened and decked
With a siren's alluring brightness ;
She was sporting a wig of raven hair
And teeth of dazzling whiteness.

My stationer friend in resisting change
Had approved himself far the aptest ;
With his halo of yellow hair framing his head,
He might pass for John the Baptist.

Of * * * * I caught but a glimpse, he fled
Too fast to be overtaken ;
I hear that his soul was burnt, and insured
By Bieber whose credit was shaken.

I saw my good old censor, too,
In the mist bent almost double ;
We met in the square where they traffic in geese ;
He seemed oppressed by some trouble.

We stopped and shook hands ; there were tears in
his eyes,
Unless I much deceive me ;
He said he was happy to meet me again—
'Twas a touching scene, believe me.

There were many I missed and could not find—
Their earthly race was over.
My Gumpelino mortal eye
Shall never more discover.

To this noble soul quite recently
Release by death was given,
And he hovers round Jehovah's throne
With the Seraphim in heaven.

For the crooked Adonis I hunted in vain
Who hawked with shouts and sallies
His porcelain cups and bedroom ware
In Hamburg's streets and alleys.

I have no notion whether to-day
Alive or dead little Meyer is;
I missed him, but I quite forgot
At Cornet's to make inquiries.

Campe has lost his faithful dog.
All his authors together, as far as
His personal grief was concerned, might have died
Less mourned than his poodle Sarras.

From time immemorial Christians and Jews
Have peopled Hamburg city.
The former are rather a niggardly race:
'Tis little they give for pity.

And yet they are not so very bad—
They keep an excellent table;
They are also prompt in meeting their bills—
When they've run them as long as they're able.

The Jews are divided against themselves ;
Each party's the only true one.
The old one sticks to the Synagogue,
Round the Temple rallies the new one.

They of the new school eat their pork,
And rebel against customs pious ;
They are democrats, while the old school shows
An aristocratic bias.

I love the old, I love the new,
The fossilized and the flighty ;
Yet to both I prefer a smoke-cured sprat,
I swear it by God Almighty !

CAPUT XXIII.

The Republic of Hamburg was never as great
As of old were Venice and Florence,
But, for oysters, Hamburg has beaten them both—
You get the best from Laurence.

When Campe and I to his cellar repaired,
'Twas an evening of glorious weather ;
On oysters and Rhine wine we went to sup—
To riot in style together.

I warrant the company gathered there
Was neither sour nor ascetic.
I found old friends like Chaufepiéc,
And new ones as sympathetic.

There was Wille, whose face is an album in which
The names of his foes academic
Are legibly writ in the blows and scars
Delivered in wars polemic.

And Fuchs was among them, a heathen blind,
And a personal foe of Jehovah,
Who believes but in Hegel, and also, perhaps,
In the Venus of Canova.

My Campe that night was Amphitryon,
He was beaming and gay and pacific.
Like a blessed Madonna he sat and smiled,
Serene and beatific.

I ate and drank with an appetite good,
And I thought to myself, as I watched him,
"This Campe is really a first-rate man;
What publisher ever matched him ?

"Who knows ? Another publisher might
Have left me to starve and perish,
But he gives me food, and he gives me wine—
The man is a man to cherish.

"I thank Thee, Mighty Lord of all,
For the gift of the grape was Thy one;
I thank Thee for making a publisher
Of Campe, and making him my one!

"I thank Thee, Mighty Lord of all,
With grateful and deep emotion
For creating the Rhine wine on the earth,
And the oysters in the ocean,

"And also for bidding the lemons grow
To improve the oysters' flavour.
O Father, grant me to digest
This supper sweet to savour!"

Rhine wine can always soften me;
It heals my feuds with others,
And wakens longings in my breast
To love all men as brothers.

It drives me abroad to roam through the streets
When I've emptied sufficient glasses;
Soul longs for soul, and spies a mate
In each petticoat that passes.

At times like these I melt and yearn—
To be frank my mood is flabby;
Every woman seems a Helen of Troy,
And every cat's a tabby.

When I got as far as the Drehbahn street
I saw, where the moon was gleaming,
A nobly proportioned woman's form,
Of most majestic seeming.

Her healthy face was round, her lips
Were like cherries, her cheek a rose was,
Her lovely eyes were turquoise blue,
And a pretty pink her nose was.

She had on a starched white linen cap,
Like a mural crown she wore it,
Folded in battlemented form,
With many a peak and turret.

A snowy tunic reached to her calves,
And what calves they were!—their duty
To upbear, like stately pedestals,
Twin pillars of Doric beauty.

Judged by her features she only seemed
Of this world—a natural woman;
But, viewed from behind, she struck the eye
As something superhuman.

She advanced and said, "You are welcome home
To the Elbe which you left behind you
Just thirteen years ago; unchanged
After all those years I find you.

“ You look perhaps for the lovely souls
That you were wont to meet here,
And with whom you dreamed the night away
Of old, in this pleasant street here.

“ The hundred-headed hydra, Life—
Grim monster!—has consumed them.
The friends of your youth and the olden days—
The past has long entombed them.

“ You will never again see the gracious flowers
That your young heart worshipped and cherished.
The storm-winds stripped them of their bloom ;
They blossomed here, and perished.

“ To wither, bruised and trodden down
Beneath Fate's cruel feet, is
The earthly lot, alas ! my friend,
Of all that fair and sweet is.”

“ And who are you, colossal form,
That welcome thus the rover ?
Where you go, may I follow ? You seem to me
Like a dream of the days long over.”

The woman, amused, replied with a smile,
“ You are wrong. All the world knows me
To be proper, and moral, and daintily bred.
I am not what you suppose me.

“I am none of your little foreign lorettes,
Your Mam’selles cheap and pretty,
But Hammonia, the guardian deity
Of your famous Hamburg city.

“You are taken aback ; you are terrified even,
O singer, once undaunted ;
Would you still go with me ? Come, decide,
And show your courage vaunted.”

But I laughed aloud and cried, “Lead on,
Most divine of lovely ladies !
Lead on, and I’ll follow wherever you go,
Were it down to the gates of Hades !”

CAPUT XXIV.

How I got to the top of the narrow stair
Is beyond my power of recounting ;
Invisible spirits with wafting wings
May have aided me in mounting.

There, in Hammonia’s little room,
The pleasant hours flew fleetly.
That I always had had her sympathy
The goddess assured me sweetly.

“ You see,” she said,” before your time
I accorded the highest glory
To the singer who tuned his saintly lyre
To the great Messiah-story.

“ If you look at the chest of drawers, you will find
That Klopstock’s bust’s upon it ,
But for many years it has only been
A block to support my bonnet.

“ You’re my favourite now ; your portrait hangs
At the head of my bed, and round it
Is a chaplet of green laurel leaves ;
You’ll observe how I have crowned it.

“ One thing alone to perfect love
Has proved a stone of stumbling ;
You must cease annoying my other sons
With your girding and your grumbling.

“ But I hope that time has cured you at last
Of that youthful misdemeanour,
And taught you to treat all men, even fools,
With a tolerance serener.

“ But tell me, pray, what prompted you
To travel north at present.
At this time of year it is bitterly cold,
And the weather is far from pleasant.”

"Alas, my goddess!" I replied,

"I cannot give you reasons;

The thoughts that sleep in the depths of the heart
May wake at awkward seasons.

"On the surface I seemed to be fairly well,

But, within, my soul was troubled.

Home-sickness had seized me, and every day
The misery grew and doubled.

"The lightsome air of France became

So heavy, I dared not trifle.

I felt I must fill my lungs again
With German air, or stifle.

"I longed for the smell of German peat,

And rooms tobacco-sodden;

My quivering foot could not rest until
Its native soil was trodden.

"Awake at nights I would yearn and long

Once more to see and hear her—

The dear old woman who lives beside
The Dammthor, with Lotte near her.

"For the noble old man I also yearned

Who chid my youthful blindness,

Yet sheltered and shielded me. Many a sigh
Has since repaid his kindness!

“ I wanted to hear his lips again
With their ‘ foolish lad ! ’ reprove me ;
The words used to echo through my heart,
And like sweetest music move me.

“ I longed to see the blue smoke rise
From the chimneys, and hear the singing
Of the Lower-Saxony nightingales
In the quiet beech-woods ringing.

“ I even longed for the spots made sad
By olden woes and losses,
Where once I wore my thorny crowns,
And dragged my youthful crosses.

“ I wished to weep where I had wept
Youth’s bitter tears so burning.
I think that love of Fatherland
They call this foolish yearning.

“ I find it hard to talk of the thing ;
’Tis an illness, there’s no denying,
And I always hide with a curious shame
My wounds from public prying.

“ I loathe the tatterdemalion crew—
I confess my pity freezes—
Who in public expose their patriotism,
With its ulcerous diseases.

“ An impudent, scabby, beggarly lot,
They importune for charity.
For Menzel and his Swabian school,
A penn’orth of popularity !

“ You have found me in a melting mood,
My goddess ! ’Twill soon be over ;
I am hardly myself, but I trust with care
Before long to recover.

“ Yes, to-night I am certainly ailing a bit—
Am distinctly under the weather.
You could pick me up with a cup of tea—
And rum—they go well together.”

CAPUT XXV.

The goddess hastened and made me the tea,
And then with the rum she braced it ;
As for herself, she drank the rum
And left the tea untasted.

She leaned on my shoulder—the mural crown
Which adorned her head so neatly
Became, in consequence, rather crushed,
And she said to me low and sweetly,

“I have often thought with misgiving sore,
What a pity that dear man tarries
Uncared for among the frivolous French,
In the wicked town of Paris.

“You wander about in an aimless way ;
You have not even beside you
A German publisher, faithful and wise,
As a Mentor to guard and guide you.

“And so many sylphs are weak and frail ;
The temptations are truly appalling.
It is easy, alas ! one’s peace of soul
To lose beyond recalling.

“Return not to Paris, but stay with us here,
Where manners and morals obtain still.
Oh, pleasures in plenty and quiet delights
Unhidden among us remain still.

“Yes, stop with us here, in your native town ;
You will relish it more than you once did.
You, yourself, must see we have also progressed
No longer we do as each dunce did.

“The censor, besides, is now far less strict,
Our Hoffmann’s grown old and mellow.
At your *Reisebilder* he slashes no more
As when young—he’s a kindly old fellow.

“There is much you rebelled at that now you’ll accept
You yourself have grown wiser and older.
You may even be able to think of the past
With less rancour, now passion is colder.

“Tis exaggeration to say that all
Was wrong that we here at home did.
You could always by suicide sever your bonds,
As the slaves of ancient Rome did.

“The mass of the people have always enjoyed
Their freedom of thought unstinted.
Repression and gagging were strictly confined
To the limited number who printed.

“And tyranny never held absolute sway ;
Even demagogues, though they contemned them,
They only deprived of a citizen’s rights
When they duly had judged and condemned them.

“No, Germany never was quite so bad,
Not even when ruder and younger.
In a German prison—I give you my word—
No man ever died of hunger.

“In the past, I assure you, there blossomed still
Quite a cheering manifestation
Of pious belief, and warmth of heart ;
Now all is doubt and negation.

“The ideal we cherished within our souls
Will be slain by this rational, chilly,
External freedom of thought and act—
’Twas as pure as the dream of a lily.

“And our poetry, languishing even now,
The future will blatantly smother.
The Moorish king of Freiligrath
Will perish like many another.

“Our grandsons will eat and drink, no fear,
But not in contemplative quiet;
The idyllic in art will be swept from the boards,
For a romping, spectacular riot.

“I would break the seals of the Book of Fate,
Could you hold your tongue; and, peeping
In my magic glass, you might even behold
What the future has in its keeping.

“The secret that never a mortal yet
Has wrung from my lips I’d show you—
The future awaiting your Fatherland;
But you could not be silent: I know you!”

“O goddess! to learn what time has in store
For my country,” I cried in a flutter,
“Would give me the greatest conceivable joy.
Not a word would I ever utter.

“To assure you your secret is safe with me
I shall not shrink from using
The dreadest of oaths. Say, how shall I swear?
The form shall be of your choosing.”

The goddess replied that the form of oath
Whose binding power would most please her,
Was the one which Abraham employed
When he sent forth Eliezer.

“Lift up my tunic and place your hand
Upon my thigh below it,
And swear that those secrets you neither will tell
As a man, nor write as a poet.”

’Twas a solemn moment. The breath of the Past
Seemed to fan me and hover o’er me,
While, obeying the order, I made my vow
As the patriarchs did before me.

I lifted the tunic and laid my hand
On the goddess’s thigh, in token
That the silence I promised in pen and in speech
Would remain till death unbroken.

CAPUT XXVI.

So red were the cheeks of the goddess, I thought
The wine to her crown had mounted.

"I am growing old," she said with a sigh,
"Oh, many's the year I've counted.

"I was born on the day they began to build
This town; I am the daughter
Of the queen of the haddocks who then held sway
At the mouth of the Elbe's fair water.

"My father, too, was a monarch proud
Called Carolus Magnus, a Kaiser
As renowned as the Prussian Frederick the Great,
Nay, mightier even and wiser.

"The chair that they crowned him in, stands in state
At Aix-la-Chapelle; the other
That was less ceremonially used of a night,
Was left to my widowed mother.

"She bequeathed it to me. To look at it, none
From a common old chair could tell it;
But were Rothschild to offer me all his gold,
I should flatly refuse to sell it.

" You can see the old thing in the corner there,
The leather all torn and battered ;
The stuffing, too, I am sorry to say,
Is sadly moth-eaten and tattered.

" But if you will cross to it now, and lift
The cushion from off the settle,
You will find a circular hole beneath,
And below that again, a kettle.

" 'Tis the kettle enchanted, in which are brewed
The powers of magic ; put your
Head into the circular hole and you'll see
The face of the hidden future.

" Yes, Germany's future before your gaze
Will roll in waves phantasmal ;
But shudder not, should the brew emit
Effluvia miasmal."

As she spoke she laughed a peculiar laugh,
But, caution completely scorning,
I stuck my head in the horrible hole,
Too eager to heed her warning.

The vision vouchsafed I must never disclose :
'Twere by honour's code unlawful :
I'm afraid I must really hold my tongue,
But, my God ! the stench was awful!—

It turns me sick to this very day,
And wofully under the weather,
To recall that mixture of rotten greens
And fetid Russia leather.

And the smells that continued to rise, ye heavens !
They were such as might come from the rifling
Of thirty-six cesspools, and blending the filth
In one malodour stifling. . . .

The commission of public safety was told
By Saint-Just, he is wrong who supposes
That deadly diseases can ever be cured
By musk and oil of roses.

But that smell of the future awaiting our land—
I don't care who may blame me—
My nose had not dreamed that such filth could be—
And at last it overcame me.

I fainted away, and when I awoke
I was still by the goddess, and found me
With my head reclined on her ample breast ;
And her ample arms around me.

Her eyes were blazing, her mouth was aglow,
Her nostrils quivered, and clinging
To the bard, like a wild bacchante she burst
Into frenzied ecstatic singing :

“There’s a king in Thule who treasures a cup
As the dearest thing in his keeping,
And every time he drinks from that cup
The king commences weeping.

“And then he remembers all the wrongs
He has not yet requited.
Why, you yourself to prison, my child,
Might be forcibly invited.

“Beware of that king in Thule, avoid
The North and its lurking dangers ;
Police, gendarmes, whole historic school—
You and they are better strangers.

“I love you, so tarry in Hamburg town ;
I love you. Oh, stay and revel
On the oysters and wine of the hour that is ;
Let the future go to the devil !

“Quick, on with the lid ! The smell is beneath,
But we’ll try to forget we know it.
I love you. Ah, never woman yet
So loved a German poet !

“I kiss you, and feel the burning breath
Of your genius thrill and inspire me.
Its surging flames envelop my soul ;
They conquer and inspire me.

"I seem to hear, in the street without,
The sound of watchmen singing.
Sweet heart's beloved, a wedding song
Their bridal music's ringing.

"The mounted attendants come riding up
In a torch-light dance decorous,
With their gallant torches flickering bright;
They foot it and sway before us.

"The high and worshipful Senate next,
And the elders, join the ovation.
The burgomaster is clearing his throat
To deliver a civic oration.

"And now 'tis the diplomatic corps
In uniform gay and sprightly,
With congratulations from neighbouring states,
Couched formally and politely.

"A religious deputation comes
Of Rabbis and pastors pious;
Then our Hoffmann, alas! with his censor's shears—
Already he's all too nigh us!

"The shears in his hand are clattering loud;
The terrible fellow's attacking
Your body itself. At a vital part
His murderous shears are hacking."

CAPUT XXVII.

What further befell on that magic night
When the goddess and I were together
I will tell you more fully when winter is past,
In the warm, sweet summer weather.

The smug old race of hypocrites
Is passing away, thank God! now;
The disease of lies is killing it off;
It is sinking beneath the sod now.

A new generation is growing apace,
By rouge and sin untarnished,
Whose pleasures and thoughts will be open and free
It shall hear my tale unvarnished.

There's a budding race whom the poet's pride
And goodness yet will capture;
Which will warm itself on the poet's heart,
And his soul of sunny rapture.

My heart is as chaste and pure as fire,
As kind as the sun's own face is.
The golden chords of my sounding lyre
Were tuned by the noblest Graces.

'Tis the self-same lyre that in days of old
Was struck by Aristophanes,
A darling of the muses nine,
As the witty poet often is.

'Tis the self-same lyre on which he sang
The story of Paisteteros,
Who, wedding with Basileia, rose
To be ranked with royal heroes.

In the previous chapter I tried—the attempt
Is an open and frankly confest one—
To copy the close of *The Birds*, which I think
Of my father's plays is the best one.

The Frogs is capital, too. I am told
They've produced a German translation
On the Berlin stage, and are acting it now
For the royal delectation.

The king enjoys the piece, which shows
That a classical taste's not lacking.
The late king greatly preferred, in his time,
To listen to modern quacking.

And yet, though the king enjoys the play,
Were the author a living poet
Who valued his person, my counsel would be
In Prussia not to show it.

Aristophanes, even the genuine one,
Who lived in freedom before us,
Might now find himself followed, wherever he went,
By a crowd of gendarmes for chorus.

The mob had gotten permission soon
To insult him instead of fawning,
And the bard, in the clutch of the dread police,
Might have seen a dungeon yawning.

O King! I honestly wish you well,
And mean you a kindness by giving
This counsel: Honour the poets dead,
But spare the poets living.

Offend not the poets alive to-day;
They have weapons of fame and glory
More awful than even the lightnings of Jove,
In the bard's immortal story.

Offend the gods both old and new,
And let all Olympus know it;
Offend Almighty God Himself,
But never offend a poet.

That the gods can punish the sins of men
Is, alas! no idle boasting;
The fires of hell are fairly hot,
And there's plenty of time for roasting.

But priests can pray the sinner free
From the flames; a pious donation
To the church for masses to purge his soul,
Will win him back salvation.

And Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time,
Will arise and break hell's portal;
And, though he may call to a strict account,
He'll be dodged by many a mortal.

And yet there are hells, believe me, O King!
Which they hold such watch and ward on,
That no prayers avail to set you free,
Not even a Saviour's pardon.

You have surely heard of Dante's hell,
In the three dread books. Oh, never
Shall any win free whom the poet put there,
They are damned and lost for ever!

No God, no Christ can save your soul
When the surging flames consume you.
Then beware, O King! lest for evermore
To such a hell we doom you.

R O M A N C E R O.

(1846-1852.)

ROMANCERO.



FIRST BOOK.

NARRATIVES.

HAVE other hearts thy trust deceived,
Be thou the truer ;
And has thy soul to death been grieved,
Seize the lyre, the renewer.

The chords resound ! A hero-song,
Rapturous, burning !
The pain from thy soul ebbs sweetly ; the
wrong
Is forgot in yearning.

RHAMPSENITUS.

KING RHAMPSENITUS betook him
To his daughter's golden hall,
Where he found the princess laughing,
Found her maidens laughing all,

Found the swarthy eunuchs also,
Laughing loudly like the rest,
Even the sphinxes and the mummies
Almost bursting at the jest.

Said the princess, " I imagined
I had caught the thief as planned,
But he fled and left me only
With a dead arm in my hand.

" I perceive now how the robber
Raids your treasure-house, and mocks,
While he steals your precious jewels,
All your bolts and bars and locks.

" For a magic key he uses,
That can open every door ;
Doors the thickest and the strongest
It can open by the score.

" And since I am but a woman,
Not a door, and was alone ;
I, who thought to guard your treasure,
Lost a treasure of my own."

Having spoken thus, the princess
Lightly tripped it, laughing still,
And the ladies and the eunuchs
Echoed after with a will.

Soon all Memphis, too, was laughing ;
Laughing every crocodile,
As it stuck its nodding head out
Of the muddy, yellow Nile,

When the noisy drums came beating,
And it heard, beside its bed,
Loud the following proclamation
By the royal herald read :

“ King Rhampsenitus, the monarch,
By God’s grace, of Egypt, sends
To his loyal lieges greeting,
And his love to them commends.

“ On the night between the third and
Fourth of June, this year, B.C.
Thirteen hundred, four-and-twenty.
With our riches making free,

“ From our treasure-house a robber
Many priceless jewels stole,
Nor was this, his first achievement,
We regret to say, the whole.

“ To discover who the thief was,
We allowed our daughter true
To keep watch beside the treasure,
But he slyly robbed her too.

“ To reward a thief so clever,
And give practical effect
To our sympathy and friendship,
And our most sincere respect,

“ We would wed our only daughter
To this thief of name unknown,
And appoint him as successor,
When we die, to Egypt’s throne.

“ Being ignorant at present
Of our son-in-law’s address,
By our herald we assure him
Of our grace, if he confess.

“ Third of January dated,
B.C. Thirteen twenty-six ;
To which we our royal seal and
Name, Rhampsenitus, affix.”

King Rhampsenitus was faithful
To his word, and not alone
Took as son-in-law the robber,
But bequeathed to him his throne.

And he ruled like other monarchs—
Succoured talent, fostered trade ;
And not much, it seems, was stolen
In his time, and theft decayed.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

KING MAHAWASANT of Siam in the East
Rules half of the Indian realm at least ;
Twelve kings and the Great Mogul himself
Acknowledge his sway with homage and pelf.

And yearly, with trumpet and banner and drum,
To Siam with tribute the caravans come,
And thousands of camels toil in through the gates
With the best of the produce from all the states.

When he sees the beasts with their heavy piles
The soul of the king in secret smiles,
Though in public he always affects to deplore
That his treasure-house hardly can hold the store.

Yet the building in question is high and vast,
Of a splendour and beauty so unsurpassed
That, outshone by its glory, the magic pales
Of the "Thousand and One" enchanted tales.

In the "Castle of Indra," the spacious hall,
The gods sit assembled, great and small,
Their golden images chiselled fair,
And encrusted with jewels rich and rare.

They are ranged around, three thousand strong,
A weird, fantastic, awful throng :
Of man and of beast a mixture dread,
With many a hand and many a head.

In the " Purple Hall " amazed one sees
Three hundred stately coral trees
As lofty as palms, that strangely spread
Their twisted boughs—a forest red.

The floor is of crystal without a stain,
Where all the trees are mirrored plain,
And pheasants in glittering plumage go
Gravely and solemnly to and fro.

The favourite ape of the monarch wears
A silken band round his throat. It bears
The key that is cunningly fashioned to keep
The hall which is known as the " Hall of Sleep."

There precious jewels of priceless worth
Are scattered as thick as peas on the earth,
With the flash of a diamond now and then,
As big as the egg of a barnyard hen.

And there, upon grey bags filled with pearls,
The king will lie down, while the monkey curls
And nestles up close to his master, and soon
They are both asleep to a snoring tune.

But more precious than all, and the crown of the
whole,
The joy and delight of the monarch's soul,
The proudest possession of Mahawasant,
Is a wonderful huge white elephant.

To house as was fit his illustrious guest
A palace was built at the king's behest,
Where lotus-carved pillars proudly uphold
A roof covered over with sheets of gold.

Three hundred men by the king's command
At the door as a guard of honour stand,
And fully a hundred eunuchs black
Serve him and kneel with bended back.

On a golden vessel rich and rare
To his trunk they proffer the daintiest fare;
From a silver pail he drinks his wine,
Flavoured with spices sweet and fine.

With attar of roses and ambergris
They anoint the beast as he takes his ease,
With a garlanded head, on the cashmere shawls
That carpet the floors of his spacious halls.

There never was, surely, a happier fate,
Yet no one on earth is content with his state,
And the noble beast, one knows not why,
Began to view life with a jaundiced eye.

This image white of black despair
Stands sad amid all that should make life fair ;
They do what they can to cure his woe,
But only to see the malady grow.

In vain before him the gay bayadeers
Come dancing and singing. Unheeding he hears
The drum and the bugle invite him to gladness.
Nothing can alter the elephant's sadness.

So daily the case more desperate grew,
And the heart of the king waxed heavier too,
Till he ordered the wisest astrologer known
To be summoned in haste before his throne.

"Star-gazer, I'll instantly chop off your head
Unless you can answer my question," he said.
"What malady causes my elephant's gloom,
And what secret sorrows his soul consume?"

The astrologer threw himself thrice on the ground,
And replied to the king with an air profound,
"I will tell you the truth, nor deceive you with lies,
And then you can act as you think most wise.

"In the North a remarkable woman dwells ;
She is tall, she is white, and her beauty excels
Even that of your elephant, sire, I swear,
Although he too is superbly fair.

“He would look by her side quite a tiny thing—
Just a little white mouse—she’s as tall, O King,
As Bimha the Big in the Ramajana,
Or Ephesus’ goddess, the great Diana.

“With what wonderful lines—what a sweep and roll—
Her limbs build up the lovely whole!
Each leg is a proud and fair pilaster
Of dazzling and whitest alabaster.

“God Amor created a temple meet,
A cathedral, in her for his worship sweet;
And the lamp that burns in that holy fane
Is a heart undimmed by deceit or stain.

“To find an image for skin so white
Has baffled the poet’s wildest flight.
Even Gautier but winged his way to a fall:
This implacable lady defies them all.

“The snows of the Himalayas fade,
When matched with her hue, to an ashen shade.
In her hand the lily looks sallow and dim,
By the contrast changed, or a jealous whim.

“The Countess Bianca this lady is named;
’Tis at Paris in France that her beauty is famed;
In that land of the North she lives and shines,
And for her, no other, your elephant pines.

“ By elective affinity, strange though it seem,
He made her acquaintance by night in a dream.
Yes, softly by night, as he dreamed apart,
This lofty ideal stole into his heart.

“ From that hour, consumed by a yearning sad,
He has sickened, who once was so merry and glad.
A four-footed Werther, a stranger to mirth,
He dreams of his Lotte far in the North.

“ By mysterious sympathy’s subtle law
He thinks of a woman he never saw,
And on moonlight nights he will tramp and sigh,
‘ Alas! if only a bird were I!’

“ In Siam in the flesh, his thoughts are in France,
Where they fly to Bianca, winged by romance.
But when body and soul are thus twain and remote,
The stomach grows weaker, and drier the throat.

“ The daintiest meat no longer he touches;
Vermicelli and Ossian—his diet of such is,
He has started a cough, is as lean as a stave;
Already this yearning is digging his grave.

“ Would you snatch him from death to which he is
hurled,
And restore him, O King, to the animal world,
The illustrious invalid send to the city
Of Paris in France, and Fate may have pity.

“ When he sees the lady, and feasts his eyes
On the beauty for which he vainly sighs :
On the charms that have haunted his dreams so long:
His sadness will fly and his body grow strong.

“ Where the eyes of his beautiful lady shine
His heart in torment no more will pine ;
The last of the shadows that nestling lay
In its depths by her smile will be chased away,

“ And her voice like a magic song will control
And resolve the discords that vex his soul ;
He will raise up the flaps of his ears forlorn,
And, renewing his youth, feel newly born.

“ Life passes so gaily, with never a frown,
By the Seine, in Paris, the frivolous town.
How civilized soon will your elephant grow,
Enjoying the vivid and varied show !

“ But one thing do, whatever beside ;
Fill full his purse, and the lover provide
With a letter of credit, all calls to meet,
On Rothschild *frères*, in the Rue Lafitte.

“ For a million ducats, or thereabout,
Be this letter of credit ; and then, no doubt,
Baron Rothschild will cry, having welcomed him
duly,
‘ An excellent soul is this elephant truly ! ’ ”

He pondered the question, but thought, to a king,
Is apt to be rather a troublesome thing.
His ape crept up; the matter could keep;
And both of them soon were sound asleep.

The decision he came to I cannot yet state;
The Indian mails, as you know, are late.
The last of the mails that came to hand
Was by way of Suez, and overland.

THE KNAVE OF BERGEN.

IN Düsseldorf castle beside the Rhine
There's frolic and masquerading;
The candles glimmer, and revellers dance
To the music's sweet persuading.

The beautiful Duchess trips with the rest,
And often she laughs and loudly.
Her partner's a slender and courteous youth,
And gaily he moves and proudly.

He wears a velvet mask of black,
His eye is merry and beaming,
And bright and keen as a naked dirk
Half-sheathed, from the scabbard gleaming.

And the carnival mummers gleefully shout
As the pair go waltzing by them ;
With growls and grunts Marizzebill
And Drickes nod and eye them.

The trumpets crash, and the deafening roll
Of the double-bass increases,
Till revel and dance at last are done,
And the sound of the music ceases.

"Illustrious lady, allow me to go ;
I must leave you." But, for answer,
The Duchess laughs and says, "Nay, first
I must see your face, Sir Dancer."

"Illustrious lady, allow me to go ;
My face is feared, all flee it."
But the Duchess laughs, "No coward am I ;
Uncover, that I may see it."

"Illustrious lady, allow me to go,
To darkness and death I am wedded."
But the Duchess laughs, "Ere you leave my side,
I must see this face so dreaded."

With stern and sinister words he strove
To deny the thing she asked him ;
Till, bent on her will, by force at last
The woman herself unmasked him.

“The headsman of Bergen!” The horrified crowd,
As if fearing to come in his clutches,
Fall back in alarm. To her husband’s side
In terror flies the Duchess.

But the Duke is crafty and saves his wife
From shame; while the whole room wonders
He approaches the man and unsheathes his sword;
“Sirrah, down on your knees!” he thunders.

“With the stroke of this sword, be it known to all,
I dub you noble and knightly;
As Sir Knave of Bergen arise,” he said;
“You’re a knave, so we’ve named you rightly.”

So the headsman became a noble, the fi
Of the Knaves of Bergen, who boldly
And proudly throve by the Rhine, but
In coffins of stone sleep coldly.

VALKYRIES.

Down below, the battle loud;
Overhead, on steeds of cloud,
Three Valkyries. With a clang,
As of hurtling shields, they sang:

“Princes quarrel, nations fight
For the mastery by might ;
Power the highest boon they crave ;
None has virtue but the brave.

“Ha ! no helmet proud can sheathe
Heads that Fate has doomed to death,
And the hero's race is run,
And the weaker man has won.

“Laurel crowns, triumphal arches !
To the gates to-morrow marches
He who slew the better foe,
Land and lieges winning so.

“Senators and burgomaster
Haste—they cannot hasten faster—
With the keys, and favour win,
And the conqueror enters in.

“From the ramparts cannons roar,
Trumpets brazen music pour,
Bells take up the joyful tale,
And the populace shouts, ‘Hail !’

“Garlands fall on every side ;
Lovely women watch him ride ;
On the balconies they crowd ;
And he greets them calm and proud.”

THE BATTLEFIELD OF HASTINGS.

DEEPLY the Abbot of Waltham sighed
When he heard the news of woe :
How King Harold had come to a pitiful end,
And on Hastings field lay low.

Asgod and Ailrik, two of his monks,
On the mission drear he sped
To search for the corse on the battle-plain,
Among the bloody dead.

The monks arose and went sadly forth,
And returned as heavy-hearted.
“O Father, the world’s a bitter world,
And evil days have started.

“For fallen, alack ! is the better man ;
The Bastard has won, and knaves
And scutcheoned thieves divide the land,
And make the freemen slaves.

“The veriest rascals from Normandy,
In Britain are lords and sirs.
I saw a tailor from Bayeux ride
With a pair of golden spurs.

"O woe to all who are Saxon born!
Ye Saxon saints, beware!
For high in heaven though ye dwell,
Shame yet may be your share.

"Ah, now we know what the comet meant
That rode, blood-red and dire,
Across the midnight firmament
This year on a broom of fire.

"'Twas an evil star, and Hastings field
Has fulfilled the omen dread.
We went upon the battle-plain,
And sought among the dead.

"While still there lingered any hope
We sought, but sought in vain;
King Harold's corse we could not find
Among the bloody slain."

Asgod and Ailrik spake and ceased.
The Abbot wrung his hands.
Awhile he pondered, then he sighed,
"Now mark ye my commands.

"By the stone of the bard at Grendelfield,
Just midway through the wood,
One, Edith of the Swan's Neck, dwells
In a hovel poor and rude.

"They named her thus, because her neck
Was once as slim and white
As any swan's: when long ago
She was the king's delight.

"He loved and kissed, forsook, forgot,
For such is the way of men.
Time runs his course with a rapid foot,
It is sixteen years since then.

"To this woman, brethren, ye shall go,
And she will follow you fain
To the battle-field, the woman's eye
Will not seek the king in vain.

"Thereafter to Waltham Abbey here
His body ye shall bring,
That Christian burial he may have,
While for his soul we sing."

The messengers reached the hut in the wood
At the hour of midnight drear.
"Wake, Edith of the Swan's Neck, rise
And follow without fear.

"The Duke of Normandy has won
The battle, to our bane.
On the field of Hastings, where he fought,
The king is lying slain.

"Arise and come with us; we seek
His body among the dead.
To Waltham Abbey it shall be borne.
"Twas thus our Abbot said."

The woman arose and girded her gown,
And silently went behind
The hurrying monks. Her grizzly hair
Streamed wildly on the wind.

Barefoot through bog and bush and briar
She followed and did not stay,
Till Hastings and the cliffs of chalk
They saw at dawn of day.

The mist, that like a sheet of white
The field of battle cloaked,
Mêlted anon; with hideous din
The daws flew up and croaked

In thousands on the bloody plain
Lay strewn the piteous corpses,
Wounded and torn and maimed and stripped,
Among the fallen horses.

The woman stopped not for the blood:
She waded barefoot through,
And from her fixed and staring eyes
The arrowy glances flew.

Long, with the panting monks behind,
And pausing but to scare
The greedy ravens from their food,
She searched with eager care.

She searched and toiled the livelong day,
Until the night was nigh;
Then sudden from her breast there burst
A shrill and awful cry.

For on the battle-field at last
His body she had found.
She kissed, without a tear or word,
The wan face on the ground.

She kissed his brow, she kissed his mouth,
She clasped him close, and pressed
Her poor lips to the bloody wounds
That gaped upon his breast.

His shoulder stark she kisses too,
When, searching, she discovers
Three little scars her teeth had made
When they were happy lovers.

*The monks had been and gotten boughs,
And of these boughs they made
A simple bier, whereon the corse
Of the fallen king was laid.

To Waltham Abbey to his tomb
The king was thus removed ;
And Edith of the Swan's Neck walked
By the body that she loved.

She chanted litanies for his soul
With a childish, weird lament
That shuddered through the night. The monks
Prayed softly as they went.

THE DELIVERER.

PLANTAGENET, thou laughest, deeming
That thou hast cured us of our dreaming,
Because thy slaves have found a stone,
And "Arthur" is the name thereon.

Our Arthur is not dead, nor hid
'Neath any coffin's stony lid.
Some days ago, myself, I stood
And saw him riding through the wood.

In velvet he was greenly dight ;
His lips were laughing, his eyes were bright.
A gallant charger he bestrode,
And hunting with his friends he rode.

I heard his bugle ring and rally—
 Tra-ra! tra-ra!—through wood and valley.
 Where'er that magic music floats
 The sons of Cornwall know the notes.

Tra-ra! tra-ra! They tell us, "Wait,
 For soon will dawn the day of fate,
 When Arthur with his loyal band
 Will chase the Normans from the land."

CHARLES I.

IN the charcoal-burner's hut in the wood
 The king sits sad and weary,
 He rocks the charcoal-burner's child,
 And sings a lullaby dreary.

Eiropopeia, what stirs in the hay?
 The sheep in the fold are bleating—
 There's a mark on thy brow and a smile on thy lips
 That bode me ill from our meeting.

Eiropopeia, the cat is dead—
 'Tis the mark—thou canst not dissemble—
 Thou wilt soon be a man and swing the axe,
 Already the oak trees tremble.

The charcoal-burner's ancient faith
Has perished ; the sons come after—
Eiapopeia—who treat both God
And their king with scorn and laughter.

The cat is dead and the mice are gay,
From his high place each is driven—
Eiapopeia—I, king upon earth,
And God the King of heaven.

Eiapopeia—my courage is quenched,
My heart is sick with fearing.
Thou art marked by fate as my headsman, child,
And the day of doom is nearing.

Eiapopeia—thy cradle-song
Is my death-song—lo ! thou hast shorn me
Of my grizzly locks—the iron sharp
Of thine axe has cut and torn me.

Eiapopeia, what stirs in the hay ?—
My head from my trunk is smitten—
It falls to the ground—*the cat is dead*—
And thou art the lord of Britain.

Eiapopeia, what stirs in the hay ?
The sheep in the fold bleat loudly.
The cat is dead and the mice are gay—
Sleep on, little headsman, proudly.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

How the window-panes of the Tuileries
In the merry sunshine glow !
And yet, by broad daylight within,
The old ghosts come and go.

Flora's Pavilion is haunted still
By Marie Antoinette ;
She holds her morning levee there
With strictest etiquette.

Court ladies in point and gold brocade
And satins and jewels shine ;
They stand or sit at their tabourets,
Bedizened and decked and fine.

How slim their waist ! The petticoat
Is hooped and amply spreads ;
The little high-heeled shoes peep out—
If only they had their heads !

Not a single head can the company boast ;
Not even the queen has one—
Which forces her gracious majesty
To go with her hair undone.

Yes, the queen with her toupee like a tower,
Who once so proudly smiled :
The descendant of German Emperors,
And Maria Theresa's child :

Sits headless now, with never a curl,
Amid her maids of honour,
Who, headless too, with no hair to frizz,
Stand round and wait upon her.

The French Revolution of course is to blame
For the sad and pitiful scene :
Rousseau and Voltaire and their doctrines vile
That led to the guillotine.

But the strange thing is, I am almost sure
That not one of those ladies flaunting
Has any idea how dead she is,
Or knows that her head is wanting.

Affectedly still they fawn and bow,
And mince and strut as they go.
How horrid to watch the headless trunks
As they dip and curtsey low !

The first of the ladies brings a chemise
Of linen without a flaw ;
The second one hands the chemise to the queen,
And, curtseying, both withdraw.

A third and a fourth advance in turn,
When the first and the second are gone,
And, kneeling down at her Majesty's feet,
They pull her stockings on.

Then a maid of honour curtseying comes,
And hands her her morning sacque ;
Another one brings her her petticoat,
And, bowing low, falls back.

The Mistress of the Robes stands by ;
Her bosom she fans the while,
And her head being gone, with her other end
She does her best to smile.

The sun peeps in with a curious glance
To see what the curtains hide,
But recoils in terror as soon as he spies
The poor old ghosts inside.

POMARE

ALL the gods of love are shouting,
Blowing fanfares in my heart,
Crying, " Hail Pomare ! Hail !
Queen and conqueror thou art ! "

Not the Queen of Otaheiti—

Pious missions have reclaimed her—
She I mean is wild and lovely,
None has civilized or tamed her.

Twice a week before her people
She appears, whatever chances,
And the cancan and the polka
In the Jardin Mabille dances.

In her every step and movement
Charm and majesty and grace;
She is every inch a princess,
Of a proud and royal race.

So she dances, and the love-gods
Blow their fanfares in my heart,
Crying, "Hail Pomare! Hail!
Queen and conqueror thou art!"

She dances. How her body sways!
Her dainty limbs a thousand ways
Flutter and flit and leap and spin;
She'll soon have jumped from out her skin!

She dances ; on one pointed foot
Whirls like the wind ; then pauses mute,
And faces me with outstretched arms.
God keep me sane before her charms !

She dances. 'Tis the dance that erst
Herodias' daughter danced, accurst,
Before great Herod, Judah's lord.
Her eyes flash lightning, death, and sword.

She'll dance me crazy ! Woman, take
Whatever gift is mine to make.
You smile ! Ho, there ! Be runners sped !
Cut me off John the Baptist's head !

III.

Yesterday, for bread to eat,
She was wallowing in the street.
Now she rides, a queen of queens,
In her coach and four, and leans,
On the silken cushions spread,
Her befrizzed and dainty head ;
Glances proudly, as she passes,
On the common trudging masses.

Ah, my heart is filled with woe
When I see you passing so !

In that coach of pomp and pride
To the hospital you'll ride,
Where your last and only friend,
Grizly death, will make an end

Of your anguish, and some blundering
Student's hand will have the sundering
Anatomic of that form
Now so lovely and so warm.
Even your horses will die hard
In some wretched knacker's yard.

IV.

Nay, your fate, I now discover,
Was less cruel than I said.
Thank the Lord that all is over !
Praised be heaven, you are dead !

Where your mother views the city
From her attic near the skies,
Passed your soul, and she with pity
Closed your dead and lovely eyes ;

Sewed a shroud and wrapped you cleanly,
Bought a coffin and a grave ;
Though they buried you but meanly,
What she had she freely gave.

Not a passing-bell tolled slowly,
Not a priest was chanting drear;
Your *friseur* and poodle solely
Walked lamenting by your bier.

Ah," the former sighed, "how often
I have combed the tresses black
Of Pomare, in that coffin,
While she sat in linen sacque!"

But the dog before the gateway
Of the churchyard turned and fled,
Ran to Rose Pompom, and straightway
Took from her his board and bed:

Rose Pompom, who would malign you,
The Provençal full of spleen,
Because no one could outshine you,
And we all acclaimed you queen?

Hapless queen of ribald glory,
With the mud-crown on your head,
God has ended now your story;
He had pity, you are dead.

As your mother here, your Father
Showed you mercy from above.
This He did, I think the rather
That you too did greatly love.

GOD APOLLO.

I.

THE convent is built on a rock that rears
From the Rhine running swift below.
The young nun sits at the window and peers,
And watches the waters flow.

In the crimson dusk, like a faery dream,
The vessel goes sailing by ;
Its garlands of flowers and laurel gleam,
And the pennons of taffeta fly.

In the middle there stands a youth most fair,
His locks are golden and curled,
His mantle is fashioned of purple rare,
In the mode of an antique world.

Nine women, as lovely as statues all,
Lie prone at his gracious feet ,
Their tunics are girdled high, and fall
Over slender limbs and sweet.

And the golden-haired one sails along,
And sings as he smites his lyre,
And, piercing the heart of the nun, the song
Flames hot as burning fire.

She crosses herself in horror and fear,
She crosses herself again ;
But she cannot allay the torment dear,
Or banish the blissful pain.

II.

“ I am the God of Song divine,
The nations all adore me ;
On Mount Parnassus stood my shrine,
’Twas there they bowed before me.

“ In Greece how many a time and oft,
Beside Castalia’s fountain,
I’ve sat ’neath cypress shadows soft
On green Parnassus mountain ;

“ While seated round, in chorus sang
My fair melodious daughters ;
La-la ! la-la ! their laughter rang
Beside Castalia’s waters.

“ And from the grove, tra-ra ! tra-ra !
The winding bugle sounded,
When, chased by Artemisia,
The panting quarry bounded.

“ I know not why, but so it fell :
To tune my lips for singing
I needed but to touch the well,
And taste the waters springing.

“ I sang—and into music burst
My golden lyre unbidden ;
I felt as when sweet Daphne erst
I found in laurels hidden.

“ I sang—and scents ambrosial streamed,
And fragrant wings unfurled ;
An aureole of splendour gleamed,
And circled all the world.

“ A thousand years ago from Greece
They drove me forth to wander,
But ah, my heart is still in Greece !
Oh, still my heart is yonder ! ”

III.

Blackly habited and muffled
In the garb of the Beguines
Goes the nun ; her hood and mantle
Are of serge the coarsest, roughest.

And she speeds and presses forward
By the Rhine, along the high-road,
Bound for Holland, asking eager
Of each passer-by the question :—

“ Have you chanced to see Apollo ?
Have you seen my lovely idol
In his cloak of scarlet playing
On the lyre, and singing sweetly ? ”

But an answer none will give her ;
Many turn their backs in silence,
Many stare upon her smiling,
Others sigh, and say, “ Poor child ! ”

But along the highway jogging
Comes a slovenly old creature,—
Moves his fingers as if counting,
Through his nose a ditty crooning.

On his back a tattered wallet,
On his head a hat three-cornered ;
To the questioning nun he listens,
Leers with cunning little eyes.

“ Have you chanced to see Apollo ?
Have you seen my lovely idol
In his cloak of scarlet playing
On the lyre, and singing sweetly ? ”

And the queer old creature answers,
While he comically waggles
To and fro his head, and drolly
At his pointed beard keeps tugging:

"Have I chanced to see Apollo?
Of a surety I have seen him:
Oft at Amsterdam have seen him
In the German synagogue.

"For 'twas there he led the singing,
And was known as Rabbi Faibisch,
Which is High-Dutch for Apollo;
But he never was my idol.

"Cloak of scarlet? Yes, that also
I remember—genuine scarlet,
And the price per ell, eight florins;
To this day not fully paid for.

"I have often met his father,
Moses Jitscher—circumciser
To the Portuguese, and clipper,
I have heard, of sovereigns also.

"Why, his mother is a cousin
Of my brother (kin by marriage),
And she deals in pickled gherkins
And old trousers on the Gracht.

“ In their son they have no comfort ;
Though he plays the lyre not badly,
He can play a great deal better
At the games, taroc and ombre.

“ He is one of your freethinkers,
Ate of pork, and lost his office.
Then he toured about the country
With a troupe of low comedians.

“ In the booths and at the markets
He has often played Jack-pudding,
Holofernes and King David—
As the latter much applauded ;

“ For he sang the psalms of David
In the king's own mother-tongue,
With the shakes and with the quavers
Of the ancient Hebrew music.

‘ And he took some wenches lately
From the Amsterdam Casino,
And is touring with these muses
Round the country as Apollo.

“ There is one of them, a fat one,
Who is christened ‘ the green sow,’
From her speaking and her grunting
And her chaplet of green laurel.”

LITTLE FOLK.

IN a little round dish he came sailing down ;

He was dressed like a wooer who's going to wed ;
He sailed the Rhine to Rotterdam town.

“ Wilt thou have me for lover, Julfrauken ? ” he said.

“ To my castle, beloved, I'll bear thee away.

In the bridal chamber that there will be thine
The roof is woven of shreds of hay,
And the walls are fashioned of shavings fine.

“ It's as trim as a doll's house, dainty and neat,

And thou like a queen shalt merrily dwell :
A spider's web for our gossamer sheet,
For our bridal couch a walnut shell.

“ Ants' eggs every day in butter we'll fry,

And little green worms we'll cook and eat ;
And my mother will leave me by-and-by
Three fumitories nice and sweet.

“ And bacon, too, and rind I've got,

And thimbles full of the choicest wine ;
A turnip grows in my garden plot.
Indeed thou shalt never have cause to repine.”

What a wooing was that: he pleaded so !
She sighed, " Alack ! " and " Well-a-day ! "
You'd have said she was going to die of woe,
But she boarded the dish and she sailed away.

*

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Is the song about Christians or mice, or what ?
Decide for yourselves; I hardly know.
'Tis a ditty I heard, and had almost forgot,
In Bavaria thirty years ago.

TWO KNIGHTS.

CRAPULINSKI and Waschlapski,
Poles who did not fear to fight
In the glorious cause of freedom
'Gainst the tyrant Muscovite,

Boldly fought, and fled to Paris
None the worse for their defeat.
Brave to perish for one's country,
But to live is also sweet !

Like Achilles and Patroclus
Each to each was as a brother :
Kissed like Jonathan and David,
Cried " Kochan ! " to one another.

They were true and loyal comrades,
Friends who never were forsworn,
Notwithstanding they were Polish,
Noble Poles in Poland born.

Had a single room between them,
Shared the bed and shared the catching
Of the vermin, one in spirit,
Rivals only in their scratching ;

Dined together in one beer-shop ;
So unwilling, both, that either
Should defray the other's charges,
That the bill was paid by neither.

And the selfsame Henrietta
Every month would trill and hum,
As she mounted from the laundry,
For the double washing come.

Yes, they really had some linen,
Each a pair of shirts, no less !
Which, for noble Poles from Poland,
Was a marvel, you'll confess.

And at present they are seated
By the fire that flickers warm,
While, without, the coaches rumble
Through the dark and snow and storm.

And a bowl of punch—a big one—
They have drunk without a stop.
(Neither lemons there, nor sugar,
And of water, not a drop.)

And their souls are full of sorrow,
And the tears are in their eyes,
Wet with weeping are their faces,
And the Crapulinski sighs,

“If I only had my bearskin,
And my dressing-gown had here,
And my cosy catskin nightcap,
Left behind in Poland dear!”

But Waschlapski answered, chiding,
“Folk like you should never roam—
Always thinking of your nightcap
And your bearskin and your home.

“Trust me, Poland is not lost yet,
For our wives will rear us men,
And our maidens will be mothers,
And our land will boast again

“Heroes brave like Sobieski,
Like Schelmufski and Uminski,
Eskrokewitsch, Schubiakski,
And the glorious Eselinski.”

THE GOLDEN CALF.

FLUTE and horn and viol urging
To the idol-dance, and surging
Round and round the Golden Calf,
To the rattle of the drum—

Brum—brum—brum—
Jacob's daughters leap and laugh !

Noble virgins linked fly,
Robes upgirdled to the thigh ;
• Like the wind they whirl and fleet
Round and round the Golden Calf,
And they laugh,
And the noisy drums are beat !

Even Aaron to his scathe,
He, the guardian of the Faith,
Joins the dance-delirious crowd,
In his holy high-priest's coat,
Like a goat—
Roll of drums, and laughter loud !

KING DAVID.

DESPOTS, when their death is nigh,
Can afford to smile and die :
Though the tyrant cannot stay,
Tyranny will last for aye.

Ah, the wretched common folk,
Doomed like oxen to the yoke,
And a broken neck for guerdon,
If they kick against the burden !

David, on his dying bed,
Spake with Solomon, and said,
“ *A propos*, there’s Joab, too.
I must leave that task to you.

“ Many years I have abhorred
Joab and his conquering sword,
Yet have never dared to touch
Him I loathed and feared so much.

“ You, my son, are good and wise,
Strong, devout, and will devise
Some expedient that will break
And destroy him, for my sake.”

KING RICHARD.

THROUGH the lonely glades of the blossoming wood
A knight comes galloping proudly ;
He sings and laughs—right merry his mood—
And he winds his bugle loudly.

His harness of steel is strong, and strong
Is his courage unconquered and fearless.
'Tis Richard the Lion-heart riding along,
A knight in Christendom peerless.

With their little green tongues sing gaily the trees,
"Oh, a hearty welcome we bid you
To England again from over the seas,
Where the Austrian dungeon hid you."

Oh, good to be under the open sky !
He feels new-born, re-risen ;
Sets spurs to his horse, the further to fly
From the smell of his Austrian prison.

THE ASRA.

EVERY evening in the twilight,
To and fro beside the fountain
Where the waters whitely murmured,
Walked the Sultan's lovely daughter.

And a youth, a slave, was standing
Every evening by the fountain
Where the waters whitely murmured ;
And his cheek grew pale and paler.

Till one eve the lovely princess
Paused and asked him on a sudden :
“I would know thy name and country ;
I would know thy home and kindred.”

And the slave replied, “Mohammed
Is my name ; my home is Yemen ;
And my people are the Asras :
When they love, they love and die.”

BRIDES OF CHRIST.

ALL who pass the holy convent
At the darksome dead of night
Know that ghosts are up and walking,
For the windows are alight.

In a solemn, drear procession
’Tis the Ursulines who pace ;
And there peeps from hood and linen
Many a young and pretty face.

In their hands they carry tapers—
Strange and red as blood they glow ;
And the cloisters dim re-echo
With the murmur of their woe.

They are moving to the chapel ;
In the choir, upon the chairs
Made of boxwood, they will seat them,
And begin their songs and prayers.

To such pious tunes were never
Words so wildly linked before.
They are piteous souls unpardoned,
And they knock at heaven's door.

" We were brides of Christ when living,
But through love of earth we strayed,
And we rendered unto Cæsar
What to God we should have paid.

" Oh, a uniform is charming,
And moustachios smooth and bold,
And alluring, more than all else,
Cæsar's epaulettes of gold.

" And alas ! we gave an antler
To the brow that once was grieved
With the cruel thorns to save us :
Our Redeemer we deceived.

" Jesus, ever prone to mercy,
Weeping, turned his face away,
Weeping said, ' Ye are accursèd,
And your souls are doomed for aye.'

“ Grave-arisen ghosts of midnight,
We do penance, weeping sore—
Miserere ! miserere !—
’Mid these walls for evermore.

“ In the grave there’s rest and comfort,
Though ’twere better in the skies—
Miserere ! miserere !—
In the warmth of Paradise.

“ Gentle Jesus, Oh, forgive us
At the last our deadly sin !—
Miserere ! miserere !—
Warm is Heaven ; let us in.”

So they sing ; and on the key-board
Of the organ overhead
Wildly storm the ghostly fingers
Of a sacristan long dead.

PALSGRAVINE JUTTA.

THE Palsgravine Jutta crossed over the Rhine ;
She steered her skiff by the pale moonshine ;
A maiden rowed, and the Countess said,
“ Dost see those seven men wan and dead—
Seven bodies afloat
Behind our boat ?—
How drearily drift the corpses !”

“ Young knights were they, who loved me well,
And, sighing soft, on my bosom fell.
They vowed to be true to their dying day,
And, that none might his vow and his troth betray,
 I had them bound
 And straightway drowned—
How drearily drift the corpses !”

The Countess laughs, and the maiden rows,
How the scornful laughter echoing goes !
The dead men rear to their middle, and raise
Their hands and swear to Heaven, and gaze
 With a glassy eye,
 And beckon and sigh—
How drearily drift the corpses !

THE KING OF THE MOORS.

To the Alpuxarres' exile
Rode the youthful Moorish monarch,
Heavy-hearted and in silence,
With his cavalcade behind him.

Seated high on ambling palfreys,
Or in gilded litters carried,
Came the women of his household ;
On the mules the swarthy maidens.

And a hundred faithful servants
On their Arab horses followed ;
Proud the steeds, but sad the riders,
Soiled and slouching in their saddles.

Not a drum and not a cymbal,
Neither song nor merry chorus ;
Not a sound except the plaintive
Silver tinkle of the mule-bells.

On the summit where beneath one
Lies the green Duero valley,
And the last of fair Granada's
Mosques and minarets is seen,

From his horse the king dismounted,
And stood gazing on the city
In the glow of sunset gleaming,
As if decked in gold and purple.

What a sight was that, great Allah !
Gone the dear familiar crescent !
Spanish cross and standard glinting
On the towers of the Alhambra !

At the bitter sight the bosom
Of the king with sighs was riven,
And his tears fell like a torrent,
And his cheek was wet with weeping.

From her palfrey high, the mother
Of the king in gloomy anger
Watched her son's despair and sorrow ;
Proudly, cruelly, she chid him,

Saying, " Boabdil el Chico,
Like a woman thou art wailing
O'er the town that with the courage
Of a man thou couldst not save."

When the monarch's favourite mistress
Heard the mother's harsh upbraiding,
From her litter she alighted,
Threw her arms around her lord ;

Said, " Nay, Boabdil el Chico,
Mourn not thus, my heart's beloved ;
From thy sorrow's depth abysmal
Greenly yet will grow the laurel.

" Not alone the conquering hero
Crowned with victory, the darling
Of the blonde and smiling goddess,
But misfortune's bloody son—

" Also he, the valiant fighter,
Who succumbs to overwhelming
And relentless fate, forever
Shall be honoured and remembered."

And the height from which the monarch
Saw the last of fair Granada
To this very day "The mountain
Of the Moor's last sigh" is called.

Time has long since brought fulfilment
Of the words of his beloved;
Proudly honoured is the glorious
Name of Boabdil el Chico.

Yea, his fame shall ring for ever
Down the ages, till asunder,
Jarring, snaps the last sweet string of
Andalusia's last guitar.

GEOFFREY RUDEL AND MELISANDA OF TRIPOLI.

STILL the tapestry is hanging
On the walls of Château Blay
That was wrought by Tripoli's Countess:
You can see it to this day.

As she stitched, she stitched her soul in,
And love's consecrating tears
Once bedewed that silken picture,
Where the scene portrayed appears

Of her meeting with Rudèl
Pale and dying on the shore,
When she found her heart's ideal—
Found, and lost for evermore.

It was here Rudèl saw also,
For the first time and the last,
Her of whom he had so often
Dreamed of fondly in the past.

And the Countess, bending over,
Holds him fondly in her arms,
While the pallid mouth she kisses
That so sweetly sang her charms.

Ah, that tender kiss of greeting
Was the parting kiss of pain !
Highest bliss and deepest anguish
In one cup the lovers drain.

Every night in Château Blay
There's a strange and furtive sound ;
From the tapestry the figures
Rustle gently to the ground ;

And the troubadour and lady
Stretch their shadow-limbs and go
Softly wandering together
In the castle to and fro.

Tender whispers and caresses,
Sad sweet love and lovers' ways,
Gallant posthumous endearments
Of the Minnesinger days.

"Geoffrey! Dead although my heart is,
At thy voice how it can thrill!
I can feel the embers glowing
In its sunken ashes still."

"Melisanda! Joy and flower!
When I gaze into thine eyes
I awake to life; dead only
Are earth's sorrows and its sighs."

"We in dream were lovers, Geoffrey,
And in death are lovers dear.
That god Amor hath a marvel
Wrought in our behoof is clear."

"Melisanda! What is dreaming?
What is death? Mere words of air?
Love alone is true and real,
And I love thee, ever fair!"

"In this moonlit chamber, Geoffrey,
How unvext the moments run!
I desire no more to wander
In the radiance of the sun."

“Melisanda! Foolish darling!
Thou thyself art sun and light;
Where thou goest May must blossom,
Spring with flowers and love be bright.”

So the tender ghosts, caressing,
Stroll and love, while others sleep;
And the moon-beams through the arches
Of the windows slyly peep.

But when dawn begins to redden
In the east, they softly fall,
Rustling back, into the arras,
And are pictures on the wall.

THE POET FIRDUSI.

I.

Men of gold and men of silver!
If a beggar mentions thomans
'Tis of silver he is speaking,
And he means a silver thoman.

In a prince's mouth however,
In a Shah's, a thoman always
Is a golden one; Shahs only
Give and take in golden thomans.

Honest people always think so,
So Firdusi understood it :
He who wrote the famous poem,
The immortal work, *Schah Nameh*.

He composed the noble epic
At the Shah's own royal bidding,
And the meed that he was promised
Was, for every verse, a thoman.

Seventeen times the roses blossomed,
Seventeen times the roses withered,
And the nightingale the roses
Seventeen times had sung, and ceased.

And the poet meanwhile sitting
At the loom of thought was weaving,
Day and night, the giant fabric
Of his song and never pausing—

Giant fabric wherein woven
Were the stories and the legends
Of his fatherland, beginning
With the kings of Farsistan.

Heroes held in highest honour
By the nation, knightly prowess,
Bold adventures, fairies, demons,
He entwined with flowers of fable.

All was blossoming and burning,
Limned with gorgeous hues resplendent,
By the sacred light illumined
Of Iran : divinely radiant

In the heavenly light primeval,
Which had found its latest temple,
In despite of Koran, Mufti,
In the poet's flaming heart.

And at last the song was ended—
Twice one hundred thousand verses,
And the manuscript delivered
By the poet to his patron.

Then the Shah despatched in answer
Swarthy envoys to the poet,
And they found Firdusi bathing
In the public baths at Gasna.

Each had brought a bag of money
Which he offered, kneeling lowly
At the poet's feet, as guerdon
For the song which he had written.

These Firdusi, who was eager
For the blissful golden vision
Long denied him, seized and opened—
And discovered to his horror

That the sacks were merely filled with
Silver pale, with silver thomans.
Then the poet laughed in anger—
Laughed a laugh of bitter scorn :

Laughing bitterly, divided
With a careless hand the money,
And to both the swarthy envoys
Who had brought the gift insulting

Gave a third, to recompense them
For their trouble, and a third
To the bath attendant offered—
Just a trifle for a drink.

Then he grasped his pilgrim's staff ;
Left the capital behind him,
And in passing through the gateway
Shook the dust from off his feet.

II.

“ If, like ordinary men,
He had promised, and had broken
Only words in lightness spoken,
I had hardly blamed him then.

“ But unpardonably vile
’Twas with perfidy to treat me,
With a double-meaning cheat me ;
Worst of all is silent guile.

“ He appeared to fail in nought,
He was noble, tall and stately,
None beside endowed so greatly,
Every inch a king, I thought.

“ And he turned on me an eye
Like the sun for blazing splendour—
Truth and honour’s proud defender—
Yet he tricked me with a lie.”

III.

Shah Mahomet has drunk and dined,
And feels at peace with all mankind.

In his garden on cushions of purple he lolls
At eve, where the cool white fountain falls.

His courtiers round him humbly stand,
Ansari, his favourite, close at hand.

From marble urns, in the scented gloom
The radiant flowers burn and bloom,

“These treasures for the poet’s use,
And greet him fair from me in Thus.”

Ansari obeyed his lord’s behest ;
Camels and mules with the finest and best

He loaded high ; the cost of which
Was equal to a province rich.

In three days’ time, with beasts and pelf,
He left the palace, and himself

With a scarlet pennon, the foremost man,
Rode out in front of the caravan.

Eight days they spent upon the route,
Ere they reached the town at the mountain foot ;

Then the caravan, with shouts and din,
Through the western gate went filing in,

And songs of triumph echoed and rang
To the beat of drums and the trumpets’ clang.

“La Illah, Il Allah !” with lusty tongue
The jubilant camel drivers sung.

Through the eastern gate at the other end
Of Thus they saw that moment wend

The funeral train, with tears and gloom,
That bore Firdusi to his tomb.

VOYAGE BY NIGHT.

THE waves were rough, and the half-moon peeped
From the clouds with a timid light.
We were three when we stepped aboard the boat :
Three souls who sailed by night.

The oars in the water drearily plashed
Like the sound of a listless sigh.
We were sprinkled wet by the white sea-foam
As the waves went surging by.

So slender, still, and pale she stood,
So wan and yet so sweet !
Like some marble statue of Italy :
Diana's counterfeit.

The wind was whistling bleak and cold,
The moon was hid away,
When overhead there rang a scream
Of sudden, shrill dismay.

It was the cry of the sea-mew white,
Like a ghost above in the gloom.
We three who heard it were afraid—
It seemed a voice of doom.

Am I stricken with fever? What phantasy wild
Of midnight burns my brain?
Am I mocked of a dream? What dream is this,
Incredible, insane?

I dream I am the Lord himself,
And that I carry, too,
The heavy cross that Jesus bore,
Long-suffering and true.

The poor pale beauty is sore distressed,
But I will end her pain:
From scorn and woe deliver her,
And every earthly stain.

Ah, shudder not, thou lovely one,
Though harsh the medicine be;
I'll pour, albeit with breaking heart,
The cup of death for thee.

O gruesome dream! O folly wild!
Delirium mad! I rave!
The darkness yawns, the billows crash
Jehovah, hear and save!

O pitiful God, forsake me not!
O merciful God Schaddey!
A something falls in the sea like lead.
Schaddey! Schaddey! Adonay!—

The sun arose and we steered for the land,
That glowed with the bloom of May.
We were two when we stepped ashore from the boat;
We were three when we sailed away.

THE PRELUDE.

THIS then is America!
This the new, the virgin world!
Not the one to-day already
Europeanized and withering,—

'Tis the new, the virgin world,
As when Christopher Columbus
Drew it from the waste of ocean,
Fresh and shining from the billows,

Dripping with the watery pearls
That in dazzling colours vanish
'Neath the sun's impassioned kisses.
Oh, how healthy is this world!

'Tis no silly heap of rubbish,
Fossilized perukes and symbols
Dull and mouldy: 'tis no graveyard
Of romantic, foolish poems.

Healthy from the healthy ground
Spring the trees—not one among them
Blasé, or with spinal marrow
Rotting, dwindling in consumption.

Giant birds are swinging gaily
On the boughs, their rainbow plumage
Shimmering brightly, with enormous
Solemn bills, and eyes encircled,

Spectacled, with rims of black.
And they gaze on me in silence,
Then begin to chatter loudly
Like so many coffee-swillers.

What they say I cannot tell you,
Though acquainted with their language,
Versed therein like Solomon,
He who had a thousand wives,

And was learned in the tongues
Of the feathered folk, not only
In the living tongues, but also
In the dialects dead and stuffed.

New the land, and new the flowers !
New the flowers, new the fragrance !
Scents of flowers wild, unheard-of,
To my nostrils rise, and tease me,

Prickling, yearning, tantalizing ;
And, my sense of smell tormented,
I keep sniffing to discover
Where, before, I met these odours.

Was't in Regent Street, in London,
In the sunny arms and golden
Of the slender Javanese
Who was always chewing flowers ?

Or in Rotterdam, I wonder,
By the column of Erasmus,
In the wafer-shop, the white one,
With the close, mysterious curtains ?

But while thus I stared dumfounded
At the new, the virgin world,
It, on its side, seemed to view me
Even with more of shy amazement.

From the grove a startled monkey,
Peeping, crossed himself affrighted,
Cried in horror, " 'Tis a spectre
From the ancient world arisen."

Fear me not, O gentle monkey
I am neither ghost nor vision ;
In my veins the blood is leapin'
Life avows me as her son.

But so long now I have trafficked
With the dead, I may have mimicked
Quite unconsciously their manners
And their oddities mysterious.

Many years, and those my best ones,
I have lived in old Kyffhäuser,
In the Venusberg, and other
Catacombs of the Romantic.

Prithee, fear me not. I like thee,
Gentle monkey, for thy hairless,
Tanned and shaven hinder quarters
Bear my favourite old colours.

Precious colours! Black-red-golden!
On this monkey's hinder quarters,
They recall to me with sorrow
Those of Barbarossa's banner.

VITZLIPUTZLI

I.

Though his head was crowned with laurel,
And his golden spurs were gleaming
On his boots in knightly fashion,
He was neither knight nor hero,

But a robber chief who boldly,
With undaunted fist and shameless,
Wrote his shameless name of Cortez
In the book of mortal glory.

'Neath the name of great Columbus
He inscribed it—just below it;
And the schoolboy on the school-bench
Learns the names by heart together.

After Christopher Columbus
He will name Fernando Cortez
As the second in the Pantheon
Of the new, the western, world.

To the last Fate tricks the hero !
Yes, our name may yet be coupled
With some robber's name notorious,
In the memory of nations.

Unremarked to sink to silence—
Were not that a better future
Than to drag throughout the ages
Such a name to ours companioned ?

Master Christopher Columbus
Was a hero, and his spirit
Was as generous and open
And as pure as heaven's sun.

Many a man has given greatly,
But Columbus gave a world,
Found and gave the vast new world
Which we call America.

'Twas beyond his power to free us
From our dreary earthly prison,
But he managed to enlarge it,
And our chains at least to lengthen.

And the human race adores him :
'Those of Europe long since weary,
'Those of Asia weary also,
And of Africa no less.

One alone, one hero only,
Gave us more and gave us better
Than Columbus, and that hero
Was the man who gave us God.

He had Amram for his father,
And had Jochebed for mother,
He himself was mighty Moses ;
Him I rank the first of heroes.

But my Pegasus, unduly
Thou dost tarry with Columbus,
For our flight to-day is lower,
With the lesser man, with Cortez.

Spread thy gay and shining pinions,
Wing'd steed, and bear me westward
To the far, the fair New World,
To the land of Mexico.

Bear me west to yonder castle
That was hospitably given
By the gracious Montezuma
To his Spanish guests as lodging.

And not food and shelter only
Were with readiness accorded
To these vagabonds and strollers ;
Presents rich and rare were added ;

Gifts of massive gold, and jewels,
Fashioned cunningly, and gleaming,
Witnessed also to the favour
And the kindness of the monarch.

This uncivilized, unlearned,
Blind and superstitious heathen
Still believed in faith, and fancied
Hospitality was sacred.

When invited by the Spaniards
To a feast which they pretended
They were giving in his honour,
He betook him to their castle ;

Full of trust and condescension
He went thither with his courtiers ;
When he reached the Spanish quarters
Was with fanfares loudly greeted.

What the title of the drama
Was, I know not ; " Spanish Honour "
Would have served ; as for the author,
He was Don Fernando Cortez.

It was he who gave the signal,
And the king was overpowered ;
And they bound him, and then held him
In the castle as a hostage.

Montezuma died of sorrow.
With his death the dam was broken
That had saved the shameless brigands
From the fury of the people.

Then began the awful havoc.
Like a wild and angry ocean,
Roaring, surging ever nearer,
Beat the raging human billows.

True, the Spaniards beat the tempest
Boldly backward ; but the fortress
Every day was re-invested
And the struggle grew fatiguing.

Worse, the death of Montezuma
Cut supplies of every kind off.
Daily shorter grew the rations,
Daily longer grew the faces.

And the long and haggard faces
Lengthening looked at one another,
And the sons of Spain thought sadly
Of their Christian home and sighed ;

Thought with yearning of their country
Where the pious bells were ringing,
And in peace the Spanish hotch-potch
On the cosy hearth was bubbling,

Thickly studded with garbanzos,
With the sausages beloved,
Little sausages of garlic
Spluttering slyly underneath them.

Then the leader called a council
And decided on retreating,
Gave instructions to his followers
With the dawn to leave the city.

But although the cunning Cortez
Had by fraud so simply entered,
Fatal obstacles confronted
A return towards the mainland ;

For this Mexico is circled
By a lake—an island city—
Rush and roar of waves around it,
Proud and strong, a water-fortress ;

All its traffic with the mainland
Done by vessels, rafts, and bridges
Which are built on piles gigantic ;
Little islands serve as piers.

Ere the dawn of day the Spaniards
Were already up and marching.
Not a single drum was beaten,
Not a trumpet blew reveille.

They were anxious that the slumbers
Of their hosts should not be broken.
(Quite a hundred thousand Indians
Were encamped in Mexico.)

But without their hosts the Spaniards
Had on this occasion reckoned.
For the Mexicans, more wakeful,
Even earlier had risen.

On the rafts and on the bridges,
On the little isles they waited,
With the parting cup held ready
For their guests to drink ere going.

On the rafts, the piers, and bridges,
Ha! the wild delirious banquet!
Blood in crimson torrents streaming,
And the bold carousers wrestling,

Body pressed and glued to body,
Till the arabesques engraven
On the Spanish mail are printed
On the naked Indian bosoms.

What a throttling, what a slaughter!
What a massacre and carnage,
Slowly, grimly waltzing onward
Over bridges, rafts, and islets!

Loud the Indians sang and bellowed,
But the Spaniards fought in silence.
Step by step they had to struggle
For an open space to fly from.

In that seething, narrow passage
They derived but little profit
From old Europe's art of warfare:
Cannons, coats-of-mail, and horses.

Also many of the Spaniards
By the gold that they had stolen
Or extorted were encumbered.
Ah that sinful yellow burden

Lamed and hampered them in battle !
Not their souls alone were ruined
By this metal of the Devil,
Even their mortal bodies perished.

And the lake was covered meanwhile
With canoes and other vessels,
Where with guns they sat and shot them,
On the islets, rafts, and bridges.

True, they hit in the confusion
Many Mexicans, their brothers,
But they also wounded many
An illustrious hidalgo.

On a bridge, the third contested,
Fell Sir Gaston who was bearing
High the Spanish flag embroidered
With the Virgin's holy image.

And this sacred picture even
Was transfixed by Indian arrows.
There were six of them that pierced it
Through the heart—six shining arrows,

Like the golden swords that always
Pierce the sorrow-laden bosom
Of the Mater Dolorosa
In processions on Good Friday.

And the banner young Sir Gaston
Handed, dying, to Gonzalo,
Who was shortly wounded also
To the death, and sank.—Then Cortez

Seized himself the precious standard,
He, the leader, and on horseback
Bore it high until the evening,
When the bloody battle ended.

On that day a hundred Spaniards
And three-score were done to death ;
And they numbered over eighty
Whom the Indians captured living.

There were many sorely wounded
Who succumbed and perished later,
And the Spaniards lost a hundred
Of their horses, killed or taken.

It was evening before Cortez
And his army reached the mainland,
Where the shore was sparsely plantec
With a fringe of weeping willows.

II.

After battle's day of terror
Comes the ghostly night of triumph ;
And in Mexico, exultant,
Flare a hundred thousand lamps.

Lamps of joy and jubilation,
Pitch-ring fires and pitch-pine torches
Throw their harsh and gaudy daylight
Upon palaces and temples,

On the guildhalls, and the temple
Of the idol Vitzliputzli,
Which was built of red brick, strangely
Reminiscent, in its style,

Of the monstrous architecture
Of old Babylon and Egypt
And Assyria, as depicted
By our British Henry Martin.

Yes, the stairs, like those he paints us,
Are so roomily constructed,
That the Mexicans in comfort
Wander up and down in thousands,

While the fierce and savage warriors
On the steps in groups are squatting,
And in wild disorder feasting,
Drunk with victory and palm-wine.

In a zigzag line the staircase
Rises slowly to the platform,
To the vast and balustraded
Roof that covers in the temple.

There, enthroned upon his altar,
Sits the mighty Vitzliputzli,
Bloody war-god of the nation,
Monster evil and misshapen.

But so droll is his exterior,
So contorted and so childish,
That, despite an inward shudder,
One is almost moved to laughter.

He reminds one of the picture
Of the Dance of Death at Bâle,
And has also some resemblance
To the Manikin at Brussels.

On his right he has the people,
On his left the mustered priesthood
Strutting proud in gorgeous feathers,
As befits the great occasion.

On the altar-steps of marble
Squats a dwarfish centenarian
In a little scarlet jacket,
Bare of chin and bald of crown.

'Tis the high-priest; he is whetting,
With a smile, the knife, and leering,
Squinting, leering, as he whets it,
At the God who sits above him.

Vitzliputzli knows the meaning
Of the glances of his servant;
Now he seems to twitch an eyelid,
Now his lips are even moving.

The musicians of the temple
On the altar-steps are kneeling;
Drummers, buglers, beating, blowing.
What a rattling, what a tootling!

What a tootling, what a rattling!
And the choir in noisy chorus,
The loud Mexican *Te Deum*
Chant like caterwauling cats—

What a caterwauling chorus!
But the cats are of the species
That we designate as tigers,
Who devour not mice, but men!

When the horrid noise was wafted
On the night-wind to the Spaniards,
To the shore where they were watching,
They were sick of heart and woeful.

By the fringe of weeping willows
They stood motionless and mournful,
And they gazed upon the city
In the gloomy lake reflected,

On the bright illuminations
Mirrored mocking in the water ;
'Twas as if they watched it, standing
In the pit of some vast playhouse.

And the stage was represented
By the platform of the temple,
And the mystery enacted
Was in honour of the triumph.

"Human Sacrifice" the title ;
Old the motive, old the fable ;
But, as treated by the Christians,
Less revolting is the drama.

For, by transubstantiation,
Into wine the blood is altered,
And the body is a harmless
Little wafer made of flour.

But the game was rude and earnest
As this savage people played it ;
'Twas on human flesh they feasted,
And the blood they drank was human.

It was blue and undiluted
Christian blood of long descent,
That had never mingled basely
With the blood of Moors or Hebrews.

So be merry, Vitzliputzli ;
It is Spanish blood they pour thee ;
Let thy greedy nostrils revel
In its warm and steaming fragrance.

They are slaying eighty Spaniards
To thy glory ; noble roast-meat
For the table of thy priesthood,
Who will eat and will be nourished.

For the priest is but a mortal,
Just a wretched flesh-devourer ;
Cannot live on odours merely ;
Like the gods, on fragrant odours.

Hark ! the funeral drums are beating
And the baleful trumpets clashing ;
They announce that the procession
Of the doomed is now ascending.

Eighty Spaniards, mother-naked,
With their hands behind them fastened,
Up the stairway of the temple
Tightly bound the guards are dragging.

Before Vitzliputzli's image
They are forced to bow the knee now,
And to dance fantastic dances
Are compelled by means of tortures

So appalling and so gruesome
That the shrieking of the victims
Can be heard above the tumult
Of the cannibal carousal.

Hapless public by the water !
Cortez listening, and his warriors,
Heard and recognised the voices
Of their comrades in their anguish.

On the stage illumined clearly
They could also see distinctly
All the figures, all the gestures :
Saw the knife, and heart's-blood flowing.

They removed their helmets, kneeling :
Bared their heads and knelt devoutly,
Sang the service for the dead,
Sang together "De Profundis !"

Of the eighty men who perished
One was Raimond of Mendoza,
Son of her, the famous abbess,
First and best beloved of Cortez.

When he saw the very locket
Which contained the mother's portrait
Upon Raimond's naked bosom,
Cortez wept some bitter tears.

Then he wiped away the tear-drops
With his glove of buffalo leather,
Deeply sighed and sang, in chorus
With the others, "Miserere!"

III.

Lo! the stars are gleaming paler,
From the lake the mists are rising,
Morning mists like pallid spectres
With their trailing snowy mantles.

End of feasting and of torches
In the temple of the idol.
On his bloody roof the priesthood
And the laity lie snoring.

None awake but Scarlet Jacket,
By a single lamp illumined.
Smirking slyly, grinly jesting,
Thus the priest the god addresses :

“ Vitzliputzli, Putzlivitzli,
O my little Vitzliputzli !
Ha ! to-day thou hast been merry !
Thou hast revelled in sweet odours !

“ ’Twas to-day the blood of Spaniards.
Oh, its steam was appetizing,
And thy nose so fine and dainty
Shone with pleasure when it sniffed it.

“ ’Tis the horses’ turn to-morrow,
Noble, whinnying, gallant monsters,
Sired by spirits of the tempest,
With the sea-cow for their mother.

“ Good and gracious thou must be, though
And must send us further triumphs ;
Let us conquer, Vitzliputzli,
Putzlivitzli, Vitzliputzli !

“ Bring destruction on our foemen,
On those strangers who from distant
And still undiscovered countries
Hither sailed across the ocean

“ Wherefore left these men their country ?
Were they hungry, or blood-guilty ?
‘ Stay at home, and live by labour ’
Is a good and wise old proverb.

“ What, I wonder, are they seeking ?
With our gold they fill their pockets,
And desire us to be happy
After death, above in heaven.

“ And at first we thought them beings
Born of ancestry the noblest ;
With the sun for sire—immortal,
Armed with lightning and with thunder.

“ But they’re only men, and mortal
Like the rest of us ; my knife
Their mortality has proven :
They are merely men who perish.

“ They are men, and are no fairer
Than we others ; some among them
Are as hideous as the monkeys,
And, like them, have hairy faces.

“ And they even say that many
Carry, hidden in their breeches,
Monkey-tails, for who but monkeys
Would require to go in breeches ?

“And their morals, too, are hateful :
They are impiously wicked ;
Why, ’tis said they go so far as
To devour their very gods !

“O annihilate these wretched,
Sacrilegious god-devourers !
Vitzliputzli, Putzlivitzli,
Let us triumph, Vitzliputzli !”

To the god thus spake the priest,
And the answer sounded sighing
Like the rustle of the night-wind
When it whispers to the sedges.

“Scarlet Jacket, bloody butcher,
Thou hast slaughtered many thousands ;
Pierce at last thine own old body
With the sacrificial knife.

“When slit open is thy body,
Forth thy soul will crawl, and, pattering
Over roots and over gravel,
Reach the pool where dwell the tree-frogs.

“Thou wilt find the queen of rats there ;
She’s my cousin, and will greet thee,
Saying, ‘Naked soul, good morrow ;
Speak, how fares it with my nephew ?

“ ‘ Is he Vitzliputzlying gaily
In the sunlight sweet as honey,
Sweet and golden ? Does good fortune
Keep his brow from flies and sorrow ?

“ ‘ Or does hateful Katzlagara,
Goddess grim of misadventure,
With her iron black feet scratch him,
That she dips in adders’ poison ? ’

“ Naked spirit, thou shalt answer,
‘ Vitzliputzli greets thee, hoping
That a pestilence may plague thee
In thy belly, hag accurs’d !

“ ‘ Thou didst urge him to the conflict,
Didst abysmal ruin counsel,
For we near now the fulfilment
Of that prophecy of eld,

“ ‘ Which predicts our land’s destruction
By a dreadful bearded people
Who were one day to come flying
From the East on wooden birds.

“ ‘ There’s an ancient proverb also :
Woman’s will the will of God is—
Doubly strong the will of God, then,
When the woman is God’s mother.

“ ‘It is she who wakes my fury,
She, the Princess proud of heaven ;
She, the Virgin without blemish,
Skilled in miracles and magic.

“ ‘It is she who shields the Spaniards,
And destruction sure awaits us—
Me, of all the gods most wretched,
And poor Mexico, my country.’

“ This accomplished, Scarlet Jacket,
Down a sand-hole thou shalt burrow,
Naked soul, and slumber soundly,
That thou mayst not see my sorrow.

“ Overthrown shall be my temple,
In its ashes I shall tumble—
I myself but smoke and ruin—
Never more shall any see me.

“ Yet I shall not die—I cannot—
For we gods are like the parrots,
Live as long and moult as they do,
Moult like them and change our feathers.

“ To the region they call Europe,
To the country of my foes,
I will fly, and, having reached it,
Start a new career of glory.

“ I will damn myself, and thenceforth
Be no longer god but devil ;
As the foe of foes detested,
I will operate and labour.

“ I will plague these Christian people,
Yes, with phantoms I will fright them,
They shall taste of hell beforehand,
And be always sniffing sulphur.

“ I will tempt both wise and foolish,
I will lure them and decoy them,
I will tickle, tease, their virtue,
Till it laughs like any harlot.

“ I will turn into a devil,
And will greet as trusty comrades
Old Beelzebub and Satan,
Belial, too, and Ashtaroth.

“ I will greet thee, Lilith, also—
Sin’s great mother, slippery serpent !
In thy gruesome lore instruct me,
And the noble art of lying !

“ My beloved Mexico !
Though I cannot save my country
I can fearfully avenge her !
My beloved Mexico ! ”

SECOND BOOK.

LAMENTATIONS.

A FICKLE queen is Fortune fair ;
She flits about from spot to spot ;
She'll kiss you quick and stroke your hair,
Then off she flies, and you're forgot.

But Dame Misfortune is not so ;
She folds you to her heart instead.
She says she's in no haste to go,
And sits and knits beside your bed.

WOOD SOLITUDE.

WHEN I was young I used to wear
Upon my head a garland fair :
A magic wreath in summers gone,
And wondrous bright the flowers shone.

Though all admired the radiant crown,
The wearer only won a frown.
From yellow envy and her brood
I fled to woodland solitude.

In forest glades how free I roamed,
Where happy beasts and fairies homed !
The sprites, the stags with antlered head,
Drew close to me with fearless tread.

They did not pause, divining danger,
They knew me friendly, though a stranger ;
The does felt safe from huntsmen's treason,
The fairies, from man's vaunted reason.

Of favours by the fairies shown
None boast but fools, and yet I own
That, in the woods, the noblest born
Were far from treating me with scorn.

The winsome elves, the airy things,
Gossiped and chattered and danced in rings,
Their gaze, perhaps, more keen than coy,
Promising sweet but deadly joy.

I watched their May-day dance and sports,
And they told me tales of various courts,
The scandalous chronicle—nothing supprest—
Of Queen Titania's among the rest.

When I sat by the stream and marked its flow,
The nixies would rise from the pools below,
The water bacchantes, slim and fair,
With silvery veils and floating hair.

The cithern and viol they played for my pleasure,
And danced the famous nixie measure.
Ah, the melody strange and the rhythmic feet !
What a ringing and springing and frenzy sweet !

There were also times when I have known
The pretty things, their wildness flown,
Sit on the grass and sing to me,
Leaning their heads against my knee.

Italian romances they'd hum and trill;
The Oranges Three I remember still.
They also composed and sang with grace
A hymn on me and my noble face.

Then, laughing loud, they would pause in their task,
And sometimes the queerest of questions ask;
For example, one of their questions odd
Was, why were we men created by God?

Had we all got souls? And if so, whether
They were fashioned of linen stout, or leather.
They inquired of me, too, if I chanced to know
Why mortals were mostly so stupid and slow.

And my answer?—Enough if the nixies heard.
To have taken offence were, of course, absurd
At anything said by a nixie droll,
About me or my precious immortal soul.

Malicious and gay are the elves and nixies,
But faithful and true the gnomes and pixies.
They serve us, and work with unflagging zest.
The dwarfs and the manikins pleased me best.

Their cloaks are of scarlet, baggy and deep ;
They are honest, though timid ; they pry and peep ;
And I always behaved as if quite unaware
Why they cover their feet with such sedulous care.

They have feet like ducks, yet all suppose
The fact is a secret nobody knows.
'Tis a rankling wound : the pain is immense.
I never could laugh at the dwarfs' expense.

Great heavens ! In this we are all the same ;
'There is something that all of us hide with shame ;
We have each our webbed feet, pose as we please,
And every one fancies that nobody sees.

Salamanders I never chanced to meet,
And the woodland folk were most discreet
In discussing their doings ; but to and fro
They would steal through the dark like shadows aglow.

They're as dry as a bone and like children in height ;
In doublet and hose of scarlet bright,
Embroidered with gold, they are neatly clad ;
Their faces are sickly and yellow and sad.

A crown of gold and rubies red
Each wears upon his little head ;
And all to the fancy fondly cling
That each alone is an absolute king.

'Tis a wonderful art these sprites have learned,
To live in the fire and not be burnt ;
Yet, never to kindle, I think on the whole,
Is hardly the sign of an ardent soul.

But of all the folk, the cleverest sort,
With their beards so long and their legs so short,
Were the mandrakes—finger-long, queer old men,
Born, nobody seems to know where or when.

On moonlight nights, when they tumble and spin,
They seem, indeed, to the rupture-wort kin ;
But, since they were always kind to me,
I have no concern with their pedigree.

They taught me spells and magic words—
How to exorcise fire, and lure the birds,
And on midsummer eve to pluck aright
The herb that hides you in broad daylight.

They taught me the stars and their signs to read,
And to sit the wind like a bare-backed steed,
And the Runic tongue, that calls from their bed
Of deep-dug clay the shrouded dead.

They taught me the whistle by which one tries
To fool and deceive the woodpecker wise,
And get him to give you the spurge that shows
Where treasure is hid of which no one knows.

The words that one murmurs low to one's self,
They taught me too, when one buries pelf;
They expounded it all—a useless measure:
I never could bury or store my treasure.

But for money, then, I did not fret;
My wants were few and easily met.
I had also my castles in Spain, of which
The revenues made me more than rich.

O happy days! To my ear entranced
The blue sky fiddled, while nixies danced;
And kobolds and elves by the flowery streams
Played round a heart that was drunk with dreams!

O happy times! when green above
The boughs triumphal arches wove;
And, crowned and glorious passing through,
I entered in as conquerors do.

Alas! that happy time is fled;
The things I loved are changed or dead.
And ah! some thief has stolen away
For evermore my garland gay.

They have stolen my garland to my grief:
I cannot tell you who the thief;
But since my radiant crown they stole,
My soul has hardly seemed a soul.

Shy and uncanny in their fear
Earth's larvæ gaze ; the heavens are drear :
A churchyard blue where gods lie dead.
I pace the grove with a drooping head.

The elves have left the woods forlorn ;
I hear the hounds and the hunting-horn.
In the copse concealed lies the stricken doe ;
She licks her wounds and weeps for woe.

And the dear little mandrakes, where are they ?
In the clefts of the rock they are hid away.
I return, little friends, to your woodland bowers,
But without my joy and my crown of flowers.

Where is the fay with the locks of gold,
The first of the fair one's kind of old ?
The great oak tree where her house she had
Is torn by the wind, and bare and sad.

The brook flows by with a Stygian tide,
And, silently perched by the waterside,
As pale as death, like a statue of stone,
A nixie sits and grieves alone.

But when, moved with pity, I venture near,
She starts, and gazing in horror and fear
For a moment wild, she turns and flies
Like one who has seen a ghost arise.

SPANISH ATRIDES.

ON St. Hubert's day—the year was
Thirteen hundred, three and eighty—
We were bidden to a banquet
At Segovia by the King.

Royal banquets never vary ;
At the festive board of princes
Sovereign dulness, undisputed,
Yawns presiding at the table ;

Gorgeous vessels, gold and silver,
Dainties brought from every region,
Leaden-flavoured as the dishes
From the kitchen of Locusta.

Tis the same silk rabble always,
Gaily decked, politely bowing,
Like a flaunting bed of poppies ;
Nothing changes but the sauces.

And the buzz and murmur round one
Soothe the senses like the poppy,
Till the trumpets blow, and waken
From the masticating stupor.

By good luck I had beside me
Don Diego Albuquerque,
From whose clever lips unwearied
Flowed delightful conversation.

Quite entrancingly he told me
Many bloody tales and scandals
Of the days of that Don Pedro
Who was called the cruel king.

When I asked him why Don Pedro
Caused his brother Don Fredrego
To be secretly beheaded,
With a sigh my neighbour answered,

“Señor, never trust the truth of
What the muleteers and rhymesters
On their slack guitars keep strumming
In the pot-house and posada.

“Never trust the stuff they drivel
Of the love of Don Rodrego
For Don Pedro’s fair young consort,
She of Bourbon, Donna Blanca.

“Twas not marital suspicion,
It was envy pure and simple
Doomed unhappy Don Rodrego,
Chief of Calatrava’s order.

“ Yes, the crime Don Pedro’s envy
Could not pardon in his brother
Was the glory Donna Fama
Loved to trumpet to the world ;

‘ And beyond forgiveness, also,
His nobility of nature,
And the beauty of his body,
Fit expression of his soul.

“ In my memory still blooming
Lives that slender knight and peerless ;
Unforgettable the dreamy
Youthful fairness of his face is.

“ He was just the sort of stripling
That the fairies fall in love with,
And a subtle secret magic
Peeped and spoke from all his features ;

“ Eyes of blue, whose bright enamel
Was as dazzling as a jewel,
Like a jewel’s, too, their hardness
And their steadiness and courage ;

“ Black his hair—a bluey blackness
Of a rare and wondrous lustre—
That luxuriantly curled,
Falling down upon his shoulders.

“ Ah, the last time that I saw him
Still alive was in Coimbra,
Fair Coimbra, when he won it
From the Moors—unhappy Prince !

“ He was coming from Alcanzar,
Through the narrow street was riding ;
Many a Moorish maid was peeping
From behind her latticed window.

“ Free his gallant plume was waving,
But the cross of Calatrava,
Sternly wrought upon his mantle,
Hindered light and tender longings.

“ And the dog he loved, his Allan,
Leapt and wagged his tail beside him ;
Of a gallant stock the beast came,
Mountain-bred in the Sierras ;

“ And, for all his size gigantic,
He was nimble as a deer,
His sagacious head was noble
Although somewhat like a fox's.

“ White as snow, and soft and silken
Hung his wavy hair about him,
And with rubies rich encrusted
Was his broad and golden collar.

“ And they said that hid beneath it
Was the talisman of truth ;
He was never known to wander
From his master for a moment.

“ O fidelity appalling !
Still I tremble and I shudder
When I think how he displayed it
In the hall before our eyes here.

“ Ah, that day of woe and horror !
In this very hall it happened !
I was sitting as at present,
To the royal table bidden.

“ At the far end of the table
Where to-day sits Don Henrico
Drinking guily with the flower
Of the knighthood of Castile,

“ Sat that day Don Pedro, gloomy,
Silent, sullen, and beside him,
Proud and radiant as a goddess,
Sat Maria de Padilla.

“ At the other end, the lower,
Where you see that lady seated .
Whose enormous frill of linen
Looks so like a great white platter,

“ While her shrunken face and yellow,
With its sneering smile and bitter,
Might be taken for the lemon
That might lie on such a platter—

“ Down below here, at the table,
We observed a place was empty,
And the golden chair seemed waiting
For a guest of royal rank.

“ Don Rodrego was the guest
That the golden chair was meant for ;
But he came not. Ah, we know now
Well the reason why he lingered.

“ Yes, the deed of blood and darkness
Was that very hour accomplished,
And the young and guileless hero
Was by treachery surprised ;

“ By the minions of Don Pedro
Was attacked and overpowered,
Bound, and dragged towards a dungeon
Of the castle, lit by torches,

“ Where the headsman’s grim attendants
And the man in red stood waiting.
On his axe the latter leaning,
With a heavy heart said sadly,

“ ‘ Make thy peace with heaven straightway,
O Grand Master of San Jago ;
Fifteen minutes are allowed thee
For the saying of thy prayers.’ ”

“ On his knees fell Don Rodrigo,
Prayed with pious calm, unflinching ;
Said serenely, ‘ I have finished,’
And received the stroke of death.

“ At that moment when, dissevered,
To the ground the head was falling,
Faithful Allan sprang and caught it,
Who unseen had slunk among them.

“ With his teeth he gripped it tightly
By the dark and flowing tresses,
And, his precious booty bearing,
He was gone as if by magic.

“ Screams of terror rang and echoed
All along the route he traversed.
Through the passages and chambers,
Up and down the stairs he speeded.

“ Since the feast of King Belshazzar
Never company at table
Was so stricken and confounded
As was ours here at the banquet,

“ When the monstrous creature entered
With the head of Don Rodrego,
From his teeth the burden hanging
By the dripping hair and bloody.

“ On the chair that still was empty,
And that waited for his master,
Sprang the dog, and held the head out
To us all, like an accuser.

“ Ah, how well we recognised it !
Knew the noble face, though paler
It appeared in death, and sterner
Than before, and grimly circled

“ By its wealth of raven tresses
That seemed writhing like the serpents
In the head of the Medusa
That could petrify the gazer.

“ Yes, the sight to stone had turned us,
And we stared at one another ;
Lamed was every tongue with horror,
And by etiquette held dumb.

“ But Maria de Padilla
Broke the universal silence,
Wrung her hands and, loudly sobbing,
Wailed with bitter, wild foreboding.

“ ‘They will say this bloody murder
Was a crime of my contriving,
And will wreak, alas ! their vengeance
On my innocent young children ! ’ ”

Don Diego’s painful story
At this point was interrupted,
For we saw the guests were rising
And were moving from the chamber.

But the knight with courtly kindness
Was so good as to escort me
Through the ancient Gothic castle,
And we strolled about together.

In the archway leading outward
From the castle to the kennels,
Which proclaim afar their presence
By the sound of yelp and snarl,

I observed that there was sunken
In the wall a sort of hollow,
Like a cage, and barred securely
In the front with iron grating.

And within were human beings :
Boys, a couple of them, sitting
With their legs in iron fetters ;
On the filthy straw they squatted.

Barely twelve I judged the younger ;
Little older was the other ;
Fair and noble were their faces,
Though with sickness wan and withered.

They were ragged, almost naked ;
On their poor lean wounded bodies
There were signs of cruel usage ;
Both were shivering with fever.

When they gazed on me, who stood there,
From their wretchedness abysmal,
With their eyes so white and ghostly,
I was overcome with horror.

“ Who are these—woe’s awful image ? ”
I exclaimed, and, startled, seized on
Don Diego’s hand that trembled,
Even as mine did, when I touched it.

Don Diego seemed embarrassed,
Looked to see that no one listened,
Deeply sighed, and answered, feigning
Still a light and worldly manner,

“ These are children early orphaned,
Royal princes who for father
Had Don Pedro, and whose mother
Was Maria de Padilla.

“ When Henrico Transtamara
On the fateful field of Narvas
Freed his brother, poor Don Pedro,
From the burden of his crown,

“ And that other burden also
Which we groan beneath, called life,
On his brother's children even
He bestowed his conquering bounty.

“ As was seemly in an uncle
He adopted them and reared them,
And gratuitously gave them
Food and lodging in his castle.

“ Though the room he has assigned them
Is perhaps a little narrow,
In the summer it is coolish,
And in winter might be colder.

“ For their food he gives them rye bread
Which is quite as appetizing
As if Ceres' self had baked it
For her daughter Proserpine.

“ And he sometimes even sends them
Quite a bowlful of garbanzos,
From which fact the youngsters gather
That the day in Spain is Sunday.

“ But not every day is Sunday,
And garbanzos come not always,
And at times the master huntsman
With his whip regales them freely ;

“ For it happens that this huntsman
In whose charge the royal hounds are,
And the cage which Don Henrico
Has allotted to his nephews,

“ Is the most unhappy husband
Of that woman like a lemon,
With the ruffle like a platter,
Whom I pointed out at table ;

“ And so shrewishly she scolds him,
That, his whip in fury seizing,
To the kennels here he hastens,
And both dogs and boys chastises.

“ But the king has shown displeasure
At such conduct, and commanded
That his nephews shall no longer
Like the dogs receive correction ;

“ To a hireling’s fist no longer
Shall their punishment be trusted ;
He himself will in the future
With his royal hands bestow it.”

Don Diego stopped abruptly,
For the Seneschal approached us,
And inquired of us politely :
Had we both enjoyed our dinner ?

THE EX-LIVING ONE.

BRUTUS, where is your Cassius true,
The watchman who used to stroll
By the Seine and call the hours with you,
While soul communed with soul ?

How often you turned your heavenward gaze
On the dark clouds drifting by ;
But your hearts held thoughts in those olden days
More dark than the cloudy sky.

Brutus, where is your Cassius now ?
On murder he thinks no more.
He reads to a tyrant and fawns, I trow,
With the best, on the Neckar's shore.

Quoth Brutus, " You poets are dull indeed,
And compounded of folly purely ;
My Cassius, 'tis true, to a tyrant may read,
But only to kill him more surely.

“He reads him our Matzerath’s famous works,
Nor better could use his breath,
For in every line a dagger lurks,
That must bore the tyrant to death.”

THE EX-WATCHMAN.

STUTTGART on the Neckar tired him,
And he left it in a rage.
Munich on the Isar hired him
As director of its stage.

Munich is a charming city ;
Brave old bock, the best of beer,
Making men both wise and witty,
Brims the bowl with foaming cheer.

But the poor director wanders
Sad and sullen up and down :
Mournfully, like Dante, ponders,
With Lord Byron’s gloomy frown.

Comedies have lost their magic ;
So have verses the most vile ;
Even the tragedies most tragic
Can no longer raise a smile.

Many a lovely woman gladly
From his heart would charm the ache,
But the tenderest glances sadly
On his brazen armour break.

Nancy in her barred cap flutters,
Woos and coos—he does not wince;
“Get thee to a nunnery,” mutters,
Moody as a Danish prince.

Vainly friends with joyous measures
Seek to sing away his woe:
“Life is good, come taste its pleasures,
While the lamp is still aglow.”

Can you not contrive to bury
And forget your grief? The town
For its jolly dogs and merry
Has a merited renown.

True, of late it has been losing
Many men it ill could spare,
Chorus-leaders of its choosing,
Gallant souls of virtue rare.

Had but Massmann not deserted!
Then whatever sorrows burned
In your heart had been diverted
By the somersaults he turned.

Schelling too! Ah, his defection
Was indeed a cruel stroke!—
As a mimic quite perfection,
As philosopher a joke.

That the great Walhalla builder
Should have gone, and left behind
All his writings to bewilder—
That was also most unkind.

All the youths Cornelius kindled,
When he went were in despair,
Once their locks were shorn they dwindled,
For their strength was in their hair.

On their hair the mighty master
Threw a spell—'twas plainly proved;
'Twas alive with things that faster
Than the eye could follow moved.

Dead is Görres, the hyena.
When the Inquisition, swept
From religion's fierce arena,
Passed away, red-eyed he wept.

There's a son, a timid rabbit,
Who this beast of prey survives;
He is venomous in habit,
And on fumitory thrives.

A propos ! That arch-notorious
Priest, as Dollingerius known,—
Some such name he made inglorious,—
From the Isar has he flown ?

By the sun's unsullied glory !
Such a face I never met.
Ah, its wretched, sinful story
Is too ugly to forget !

His arrival upon earth was
To his mother's lasting shame.
For the manner of his birth was
Too unnatural to name.

He was one in the procession
On Good Friday winding slow.
'Mongst those men of dark profession,
None was dark as he, I know.

Yes. Monácho Monachorum
Is to-day the stronghold fit
Of virorum obscurorum,
Made renowned by Hutten's wit.

Hutten ! Ha ! your eyes are flashing.
Wake, a watchman as before !
Here are cowls that want a lashing ;
Drub them soundly as of yore.

Till their backs are bloody beat them,
Copy Ulrich ; flog amain.
To such blows did Ulrich treat them
That they bellowed fierce with pain.

Loud and long, in merry humour,
Laughed Erasmus at the joke :
Laughed so loud that from his tumour
He recovered, for it broke.

On the Ebersburg with laughter
Shouted Sickingen like mad,
And all Germany rang after
With that lusty peal and glad ;

Young and old—the laugh went ringing ;
As for Wittenberg, be sure
It was one guffaw while singing
“ Gaudeamus igitur ! ”

But when dirty cows are beaten
One must count on catching fleas ;
Poor Von Hutten was half eaten,
And tormented sore with these.

“ Alea jacta est ! ” however,
Was the hero’s battle-cry,
Nimble were his hands and clever :
Fleas and clergy both must die.

' Does your heart not glow with anger,
You who called the hours of yore ?
Rise, and cast away your languor
On the distant Isar shore !

Stretch your legs again for running,
Nor let sloth their speed retard ;
Be they stupid cowls or cunning,
So they be but cowls, beat hard !

But he wrings his hands, while dreary
Is his sigh for lost repose ;
Says, " My legs though long are weary
With old Europe and its woes.

" And my corns are hurting badly,
For my German shoes are tight.
Where they pinch I know, and gladly
Would be left in peace—Good night ! "

FESTAL ODE.

BLER-MEYER, Meyer-Beer,
What a tumult rends the air !
Are you really brought to birth
With the saviour of the earth,
With the promised man sublime ?
Are you truly near your time ?

Shall the masterpiece whose pain
Thirteen years convulsed your brain—
“Jan von Leyden,” child of anguish—
See the light where now you languish?

Yes, it is no canard merely
Of the journals; it is clearly
A delivery at last;
And the pangs are overpast,
And the honoured patient lies—
Heaven’s peace upon his eyes—
On the bed bedewed with tears,
And the midwife, Gouin, nears,
Lays a napkin on the slack
Form as empty as a sack.
But a sudden crash and boom
Breaks the silence of the room!
It is Israel without,
And a thousand voices shout,
Thunder, “Hail!” with one accord
(Some untempted by reward),
“Hail to Meyer-Beer, hail!
He is great and shall prevail.
Hail to him, our master dear!
After labour long and drear,
After ages anguish-torn,
Now at last our prophet’s born.”

From the crowd that cries and cheers
Steps a man, still young in years,
Called Herr Brandus—man of worth,
And a Prussian as to birth ;
Modest-mannered (although shown
Every trick that can be known
By the rats' foe Schlesinger,
Beduin, music publisher,
Whom he has succeeded proudly),
On a drum he pummels loudly
With a boom and with a bang,
As when Miriam danced and sang
After Moses won the battle ;
And he sings above the rattle :

“ Sweat of art and genius holy,
Drop by drop, had gathered slowly
In the reservoir, and lay
Safely dammed until the day
When the sluice was opened wide.
Now the seething, surging tide
Rolls majestic ! Burst asunder
Are its bonds. This heaven's wonder
Like the vast Euphrates roars,
Or the Ganges, by whose shores,
Where the slender palm-trees sway,
Plunge young elephants at play ;
Or the Rhine that rushing, foaming

By Schaffhausen, lures the roaming
Berlin student he bewitches
To the wetting of his breeches ;
Or the Vistula the scratching
Poles are never tired of watching,
While they sing beside its billows
Hero-songs beneath the willows.
It is almost like a sea,
Like the Red one, from which we
Came dry-footed with our plunder,
And which Pharaoh perished under
With his host, ere he had passed.
Ah, how deep and wide and vast !
Such a watery composition
Is, we're forced to make admission,
On the globe unmatched, sublime
And titanic for all time,
Great as God and Nature—*more,*
I'm the owner of the score !"

EPILOGUE.

IN PRAISE OF THE CELEBRATED MAESTRO FIASCOMO

THE negroes inform us, believe it who will,
That the lion, the king of the beasts, when ill,
A monkey, as medicine, in pieces will tear,
And eat him entire with the skin and the hair.

No lion am I, or forest king,
But the negro-prescription I thought I would bring
To the test—for which reason this poem was writ,
And, oddly enough, I feel better for it.

THE DESCENDANTS OF PLATEN.

You announce your Iliads loudly,
And your Odysseys you plan,
And, in you, assure us proudly
We behold the coming man.

But such wordy, windy actors,
Who have nothing done as yet :
Intellectual benefactors
Of your sort : I've often met.

Here is Rhodes, and they are dancing ;
Give a sample of your skill,
Or begone, and stop romancing
If you neither can nor will.

Real princes, coin possessing
In the realm of genius, pay.
Schiller, Goethe, Wieland, Lessing
Asked no credit by the way.

Not for them ovations purely
From the public begged on trust;
Nor the laurels prematurely
Snatched, with greedy hand out-thrust.

Dead the mediæval swagger
Of the youths of noble name;
But it lives still in the bragger
About distant, deathless fame.

All such boasters, oh, believe me,
Are of real Platen blood;
On this point can none deceive me,
I have known too well the brood.

MYTHOLOGY.

WHAT Europa did was wrong,
But a bull is very strong.
As for Danaë, who could scold
One subdued by showers of gold!

Semele, too, must be forgiven,
For she thought, "A cloud of heaven-
It would very much surprise me
If a cloud could compromise me."

But to pardon Leda's tale
Mildest tolerance must fail.
What a goose we must believe her,
When a swan could so deceive her !

ON THIS SIDE OF THE RHINE
AND ON THAT.

WILD caresses, tender woes,
Dallying with the burning rose,
Fragrance sweet and lovely lies,
Passion rude in noble guise,
Love—its arts, its blisses, sighs—
Masters are the French in those.

For the art of hating, none
Like the Germans. Hate begun,
In the soul the drops distil
And the poison mounts until
There's enough at last to fill
Even Heidelberg's vast tun.

IN MATILDA'S ALBUM.

UPON these rags transformed to paper
My goose-quill is compelled to run,
And I am forced in verse to caper
Half seriously and half in fun.

I who am used, such methods spurning,
Upon your rosy mouth my part
To speak in kisses warm and burning,
That flame resistless from my heart!

By fashion we are mania-bitten !
Are you a poet?—Then your wife,
Till in her album you have written
Like other stars, will plague your life.

MULEDOM.

YOUR worthy father was an ass,
As all the world is well aware ;
Your mother was of better stock :
A thoroughbred and gallant mare.

You are a mule and cannot change,
Although you find the fact a trial ;
But that there's horse-blood in your veins
You can maintain against denial :

From proud Bucephalus himself
Can vaunt descent ; devoutly raiding,
Your forebears bore to l'alestine
The hosts of Christendom, crusading.

And as your kinsman you can claim
The high white steed in blood who trod
'Neath mighty Godfrey de Bouillon,
The day he took the town of God :

Can pose as cousin to Bayard,
And hold, though evidence be scanty,
It was your aunt Don Quixote rode,
The hero-hearted Rosinante.

That your connection is as close
With Sancho's donkey, do not tell ;
And even the ass that bore our Lord
You must, of course, deny as well.

Nor need your coat of arms display
An ass's ear. Assert your worth ;
For just as you esteem yourself
You'll be esteemed upon the earth.

RATIONALISTIC EXEGESIS.

NOT *by* ravens, *on* them merely
Was Elijah fed, we're told.
So the miracle was, clearly,
Some translator's slip of old.

Yes, he dined on ravens roasted,
Just as we with less religion,
In our Berlin caf  s boasted,
Eat in faith our roasted pigeon.

SYMBOLICS OF NONSENSE.

WE now begin to sing a song,
For our theme a numeral taking :
We sing the song of Number Three—
All bliss must end in aching.

Our number was an Arab born,
But, former sins forsaking,
She soon became a Christian good,
Not one commandment breaking.

A lobster never turned as red
As Number Three on taking
A man together with a maid :
Her anger left them quaking.

In summer warm, at seven o'clock
She drank her coffee, slaking
Her thirst in winter cold at nine—
A cosier hour for waking.

But now 'tis time to change the rhyme,
For changed and dark the morrow
That dawned at last for Number Three :
She suffered pain and sorrow.

A cobbler came along who said—
O a cruel cobbler he was !—
Like a Seven small on a crescent moon
The head of Number Three was ;

That the mystic number was Seven among
The old Pythagoreans,
While the crescent was Diana's sign
And also the Sabæans'.

And that Three herself was the shibboleth
Of the senior bonze at Babel ;
Intriguing with whom, she brought to birth
The Holy-Trinity fable.

Then a tailor arrived who said with a smile,
“ Your fancy's been cutting a caper.
This Three of yours never existed at all,
Except as a mark on paper.”

When she heard the tailor, poor Number Three
Resented the libel madly ;
Like a duck distracted she waddled about,
And wailed, and whimpered sadly,

“I’m as old as the forest, as old as the sea,
As old as yon star that flashes.
I have seen whole races and kingdoms rise,
And seen them sink to ashes.

“I have stood at the noisy loom of time
For many a thousand ages.
I have gazed into nature’s fashioning womb,
Where eternal tumult rages.

“I have seen the sensual forces dark,
But never let them surge in
This heart of mine : I have watched the show,
A pure, unspotted virgin.

“But what avails my virtue now,
By both wise and foolish flouted ?
The world is bad, unjust and mad ;
The best of us are doubted.

“But thy hope and faith and love, my heart,
They have been forced to leave me ;
Of my coffee good and my drop of rum
No sceptic can bereave me.”

THE ANGELS.

YES, a disbelieving Thomas
You may call me; sure am I
That Jerusalem's and Roma's
Promised heaven is a lie.

On the other hand, that real
Are the angels has been proved.
Beings faultless and ideal
Here below in light have moved.

As regards their wings, however,
Gentle lady, I demur;
Though I've seen such angels, never
Have I known the wings occur.

With their dainty hands how kindly,
And how sweetly with their glance,
They uphold us stumbling blindly,
And protect us from mischance! .

Ah, their favour, when they show it,
Comforts all, but most, I know,
Him whose portion, as a poet,
Is a double load of woe!

PRIDE.

O COUNTESS GUEDEL of Gudelfeld,
Because you have money the world has knelt
In your gilded coach and four,
The court levee in store,
You drive to the castle, bright
With many a waxen light.
Up the marble stairs you wind,
Your rustling train behind,
And the gorgeous lackeys standing
In rows upon the landing
Shout: "Madame la Comtesse de Gudelfeld!"

Proudly, your fan in your hand,
You stroll through the chambers grand;
Your bosom swells with pleasure,
Laden with costly treasure
Of diamonds that shine
Mid pearls and Brussels fine.
Oh, the smiles and the curtsies unending,
The becking and bowing and bending!
The Duchess of Pavia meets you,
With "Cara mia" greets you,
The courtiers and squires, advancing,
Invite you to join in the dancing,

And, famed for his wit and his taste,
The Crown Prince cries, "From the waist
How superbly swings the Gudelfeld!"

But if, poor thing, you lost your gold,
The world would turn a shoulder cold;
The lackeys in sheer disdain
Would spit upon your train,
And insults take the place
Of bowing and courtly grace,
The "Cara mia" be "Hence!"
And the prince, with disgust intense,
Cry, "Of garlic smells the Gudelfeld!"

WINTER.

THE cold can burn and nip
Like fire, and bring disaster.
With the whirling snow for whip
Faster we run and faster.
Oh, the harsh and cruel winters,
With frozen noses coming,
When cars are smashed in splinters
By vile piano-strumming!
Ah, summer is the time!—
To green woods far from cities
I bear my griefs, and rhyme,
Alone, my tender ditties.

THE OLD CHIMNEY-PIECE.

SNOWFLAKES drifting wan and dreary ;
Dark the night and loud the storm.
In the chamber here, how cheery,
Dry and lonely, still and warm !

And I muse upon the settle,
By the pleasant crackling glow,
And I hear the humming kettle
Singing songs of long ago ;

While the cat beside me sitting
Warms her paws before the blaze,
And the flames that dance in flitting
Weave a spell upon my gaze.

Many a long-forgotten story
Rises dim from vanished years :
Filing past, in faded glory,
Masquerades and disappears :

Lovely women beckoning sweetly
With a wise, mysterious smile,
Merry harlequins that fleetly
Laugh and pirouette the while ;

And the marble statues, gleaming
From afar, their greeting send,
Where the flowers of fable, dreaming
In the moonlight, wave and bend.

And enchanted castles gliding
Pass, and rock, and are no more ;
And the armoured knights come riding
With the gallant squires of yore.

For a moment sweet they hover,
And are gone like shadows vain—
Ah ! the kettle's boiling over,
And poor pussy howls with pain.

YEARNING.

IN thy dreams thou seest, burning,
Fabled flowers strange and still,
And the magic odours thrill
Through thy soul with bliss and yearning.

But a deep abyss and dreary
Yawns between you evermore,
And at last thy heart is sore,
For it bleeds and it is weary.

From beyond the depths that sunder,
How they beckon, how they lean !
Couldst thou bridge the gulf between,
Master Carpenter, I wonder ?

TO THE YOUNG.

TURN for no luring, hold on, enduring,
Gold though the apples may lie in your way !
Sabres are clashing, arrows are flashing :
These will not hinder the hero, nor stay.

Boldly begun, and the half is done !
Alexander the Great won a world of old.
No pause for debating ! The queens are waiting,
They kneel in the tent to the victor bold.

We do and we dare ! We mount, as the heir,
To the bed of Darius, and sit on his throne.
How sweet is the doom ! To die thus in bloom !
A triumph-drunk death in Babylon !

THE UNBELIEVER.

AND thou wilt lie within my arms !
The magic thought confounds
My trembling soul with sweet amaze ;
My heart with rapture bounds.

And thou wilt lie within my arms !
I'll stroke thy golden hair,
And on my shoulder thou wilt lean
Thy head so fond and fair.

Yes, thou wilt rest within my arms !
No lying dream is this.
Already I shall taste on earth
Of heaven's highest bliss.

O Doubting Thomas ! To believe
My heart will be afraid,
Until upon my rapture's wounds
My finger I have laid.

AFTER EFFECTS.

STRANGE that clouds so dull and grey
Rose from out a sea of pleasure !
Full the morrow pays the measure
Of the joys of yesterday.

Purest nectar was the liquor ;
Now 'tis wormwood. Oh, this head !
Heart and stomach weigh like lead.
Sickest cat could not be sicker !

FOR DOMESTIC PEACE.

MANY women, many fleas,
Fleas and scratching all the while—
But, in secret when they tease,
You must bear it with a smile.

Else at night with roguish art
They will take a vengeance deep—
Would you press them to your heart,
They will turn away and sleep.

FAREWELL.

LIKE a pelican I fed you
With the life-blood of my veins,
And a cup of gall and wormwood
You have poured me for my pains.

True, you meant it not for malice,
And your brow was clear and kind—
With, unfortunately, nothing
But forgetfulness behind.

Fare you well—you hardly notice
That I weep because we part.
Little fool, may God preserve you
Still a butterfly at heart!

WHITHER NOW ?

WHITHER now ? My foot is foolish,
And to Germany would go ;
But my reason sees the folly,
Shakes her head, and murmurs, " No.

" Though the war indeed is over,
Martial law, alas ! is not,
And they tell me you have written
Stuff for which you might be shot."

'Tis a fact, and most unpleasant
Would the shooting process be :
There is nothing of the hero
Or his pathos about me.

I would gladly go to England,
If the smoke were not so thick,
And if even to smell the English
Did not always make me sick.

I have more than once been tempted
By America's renown,
Where, in Freedom's mighty stable,
Stalled alike is every clown ;

But I fear a land where skittles
Can be played without a king,
Where the natives chew tobacco,
And spittoons are not the thing.

The delightful land of Russia
Might appeal to me, no doubt,
But in winter rather trying
I should find, I fear, the knout.

Then I sadly gaze above me,
Where the stars in thousands shine,
But, 'mid all the nodding thousands,
I can see no trace of mine.

Has it lost its way in heaven's
Golden labyrinth of light,
As, on earth, I too have wandered
In the tumult and the night ?

GO ROVING !

If she you loved has proved unkind,
Love one that will be fonder ;
Or, better, leave the town behind—
Strap wallet on, and wander !

You soon will reach a lake of blue
 Enclosed by weeping willows ;
There let your trivial tears bedew
 The grass, and spare your pillows.

Then climb the rugged mountain sheer ;
 Though toil and stress confound you,
When you are on the top you'll hear
 The eagles calling round you.

And free as they, and strong of wing,
 Your life and strength renewing,
You'll think your loss a little thing,
 And hardly worth the rueing.

AN OLD SONG.

DEAD ! You are dead and know it not.
Your eyes of light in dust will rot,
Your rosy lips be death-defiled.
Dead ! You are dead, my poor dead child.

Myself I bore you to the tomb
One summer night of dread and doom ;
The nightingales were singing drear,
The stars were mourners round your bier.

We passed the wood, where echoing rang
The solemn litanies we sang.
The pines in sable mantles said
Their murmured prayers for the dead.

And when we reached the willow-lake
The dancing elves were all awake,
And from their fairy rings, in woe,
Gazed sadly on us wending slow.

When we came to your grave that waited deep,
The moon climbed down from heaven's steep
And preached a sermon. Sob and groan,
And from afar the church bell's moan.

PRUDENCE.

Love said, sighing, to Apollo,
"Times are hard, and I must be,
Ere I yield my all, protected
By some solid guarantee."

"Yes," the god of song said, laughing,
"Times are changed; you speak and frown
Like some ancient money-lender
Who demands his pledges down.

Ah, my lyre's my only treasure,
But the gold is good and pure.
Say, how many kisses, darling,
Do you think it might procure?"

THE OLD ROSE.

WHEN my heart adored her first
She was still a rosebud tender,
But the rose in blossom burst,
And she grew and waxed in splendour.

Not a rose in all the land
Was so fair in its completeness,
But with thorns she pricked my hand,
When I fain had plucked her sweetness.

Now at last, when overblown
And defaced by wind and showers,
I am "Dearest Henry" grown,
And her kindness overpowers.

Henry here and Henry there!
Fond the voice that was so flouting,
And, if thorns are anywhere,
On her chin you'll see them sprouting.

On the chin by warts defiled
Bristles hard have found a harbour—
Get thee to a nunnery, child :
Either that, or to the barber.

AUTO-DA-FÉ.

WITHERED violets, dusty tresses,
And a faded band of blue,
Long-forgotten tender trifles,
Torn and tattered billets-doux.

And regretfully I drop them
In the flames that brightly glow,
And the ruins crackle sadly
Of my bliss and of my woe.

Vows of lovers, frail and fleeting,
Up the chimney how they fly !
While the little love-god laughing
And unseen is standing by.

For a while I sit, and dreaming
Watch the ruins where they fell :
Watch the sparks that in the ashes
Softly glow—Good night—Farewell !

L A Z A R U S.

I.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

If you've much, you will have more :
You will multiply and add.
If you've little, you will lose
Even the little that you had.

If you've neither purse nor pelf—
If you've nothing great or small—
You were better in your grave ;
You've no right to live at all.

2.

RETROSPECT.

IN the kindly kitchen of the earth
I have smelt every smell, and know its worth.
I have drained the world's delight, full measure,
And like a king have had my pleasure.

I have drunk my coffee and eaten buns,
Have had dolls in plenty, and pretty ones;
Worn silken vests and frock-coats grand,
And jingled my ducats with open hand.
Like Gellert I've ridden a charger high;
A house, and a castle as well, had I.
On Fortune's green meadow I lay; the sun
With a glance more golden has greeted none;
A garland of laurel crowned my head,
And odorous dreams sweet fragrance shed:
Of roses I dreamed and eternal May;
In an idle twilit trance I lay,
And into my mouth roast pigeons flew,
And dear little angels came and drew
Champagne from their pockets to quench my thirst . . .
Alas! for my dreams—the soap-bubbles burst—
And now I lie on the grass in the damp,
My joints are rheumatic and twisted with cramp;
My body is chilled to the bone, I am lame,
And my soul is burdened and bowed with shame.
Each joy, each pleasure, has cost me double
Its worth in vexation of spirit and trouble.
Of bitter woe my drink has been,
I have been stung by things unclean,
Harassed have been by gloomy sorrow,
Have had to lie, have had to borrow
From gilded fools, from filthy hags,
Have even had to beg in rags.

And now I'm tired of running round,—
Would fain be snoring underground.
My Christian brothers above, good-bye!
Of course we'll meet again on high.

3.

RESURRECTION.

THE trumpet blows, and loud the skies
Re-echo with the sound;
And from their graves the dead arise
And stretch their limbs long bound.

All who have legs set off apace:
The white-robed figures go
To Jehoshaphat, the gathering-place,
To be judged for weal or woe.

The Head of the Court is Christ the Lord,
Mid his twelve Apostles seated;
The Assessors they, whose each award
And word is wisely meted.

When the Trump of Doom awakes the dead:
When dawns the Judgment Day:
At this last tribunal, from every head
The mask is stripped away.

In the Vale of Jehoshaphat stand the ghosts,
Summoned forth to be damned or shriven,
And because of the overwhelming hosts,
A summary judgment's given.

The goats to the left, the sheep to the right—
They are sundered, and go to dwell,
The pious sheep in the realms of light,
The wanton goats in hell.

4.

THE DYING ONE.

AFTER sun and joy you went,
Naked you return and spent.
German truth and German shirt—
Wanderers lose them to their hurt.

Though as pale as death your face,
You're at home: take heart of grace.
Warm as on the glowing hearth,
Germans lie in German earth.

Many a one, alas! grew lame,
Died ere to his home he came,
Arms outstretched toward the goal—
Christ have mercy on his soul!

5.

GRUB STREET POETS.

THE subtler forms of flattery shun,
If you would please the man of pelf;
For gold is flat, my child, and won
By flattery flat and like itself.

Then boldly swing the censer rich
Before all sacred Golden Calves.
Beg in the dust and in the ditch,
But see you never praise by halves.

Bread's dear just now and hardly got,
Although the fairest words can still
Be had for nothing——Sing——why not? —
Mecarnas' dog, and eat your fill!

6.

A MEMORY.

THE pearl for the first, for the second the cover.
O William Wisetzki, your life was soon over—
But the kitten, the kitten was saved.

He climbed the plank, but it split asunder,
And drowned he lay in the water under—
But the kitten, the kitten was saved.

We followed his bier : the boy of our love ;
They laid him where May flowers bloomed above—
But the kitten, the kitten was saved.

Ah, wise were you who a shelter won
Ere the storms of life were well begun—
But the kitten, the kitten was saved.

Ah yes, you were wise to escape so quick ;
You were cured of your ills before you fell sick—
But the kitten, the kitten was saved.

As my years have mounted, more and more
I have thought of you sadly, and envied you sore—
But the kitten, the kitten was saved.

7.

IMPERFECTION.

Nothing is perfect in this world. The rose
Still by the wounding thorn companioned grows.
Yea, I believe, above in heaven's brightness
The angels have some flaw to mar their whiteness.

The tulip has no scent ; and by the Rhine
They say "Even Honesty hath stolen swine."
Had not Lucretia stabbed herself, dishonour
And childbirth pangs had doubtless come upon her.

The haughty peacock has ungainly feet.
The wittiest woman can, for dulness, beat
Klopstock's *Messiah*, or at times can weary
Like Voltaire's *Henriade*, which is as dreary.

The Venus of Canova, viewed behind,
Is far too flat, like Massmann's nose, you'll find.
Spanish not even the wisest cow is pat in,
And Massmann knows as little, or less, Latin.

Why, Alexander Dumas's a quadroon:
Stings lurk in virgin honey; many a tune
By a bad rhyme is spoilt, that else most sweet is;
His fatal heel undid the son of Thetis.

In Heaven's canopy the star most bright,
When it has caught a cold, sinks from our sight;
The primest cider keeps the barrel's flavour;
Black spots deface the sun, and mar his favour.

And you, dear Madam, cannot hope to be
From every flaw and every blemish free.
You stare, and ask, "What fails?"—Ah, might you
win it!—
Only a bosom, and a soul within it.

8.

PIOUS WARNING.

WHEN ended is thy sojourn here,
Immortal soul, beware
Lest evilly thou fare.
Through Death and Night the road lies drear.

In the city of light, at the golden gate,
God's soldiers will stand and ask
How thou hast done thy task,
Inquiring not thy name and state.

At the door the pilgrim takes from his feet
The dusty shoes that pressed—
Enter; within are rest
And easy slippers and music sweet.

9.

THE COOLED-DOWN ONE.

ONE lies so long when one is laid
Dead in the dust! I am afraid,
Yes, much afraid the Day of Doom
May tarry long before it come.

From life and light ere I depart,
Oh once, before I break my heart—
Before I die, I fain would find
Some woman fair who would be kind.

But I will only have a blonde,
With eyes like moonlight, soft and fond
Somehow at last I've lost desire
For wild brunettes of sun and fire.

Young folk are strong and full of life;
They must have passion and its strife,
Frenzy and noisy vows—the whole
That makes for mutual pain of soul.

No longer young and far from strong,
As I am now, once more I long
To love as in the earlier years,
Dream and be happy—without tears.

10.

THE WISE STARS.

THE flowers spring sweet so near our feet
That most of them come to sorrow.
We pass along, and weak and strong
Lie crushed in the grass to-morrow.

The pearls rest in the ocean's chest,
Yet we know how to seek and find them.
They are pierced when found ; to the yoke they're
bound :
With a silken cord we bind them.

The stars are wise and dwell in the skies
Remotely and securely.
They light at even the tent of heaven,
And shine for ever purely.

II

MORPHIA.

THE two young gracious forms are much alike,
Though of his mien more earnest and more grave—
More proud and noble, I had almost said—
The one is than that other, in whose arms
I lay so closely clasped. How soft and kind,
How exquisitely lovely was his smile,
How sweet and full of rapture was his gaze !
It may be that the poppy wreath he wore,
Touching my forehead with its drowsy petals,
With its mysterious fragrance chased away
All sorrow from my soul.—But brief, alas !
Is such assuagement. I shall not be well

Until his torch the other shall have lowered :
The brother that so grave is and so pâle—
For Sleep is good, but Death is better—best
Indeed were never to be born at all.

12.

SOLOMON.

DRUM, bugle and sackbut are hushed for the night.
Twelve thousand angels with girded sword
By King Solomon's bed keep watch and ward :
To the left six thousand, and six to the right.

From sorrowful dreams they shield his sleep.
If so much as a frown his forehead shades,
The night is aflame with flashing blades—
Twelve thousand swords from their scabbards leap.

But softly back to its scabbard slips
Each angel-sword, for vanished now
Is the night-bred fear, and the sleeper's brow
Is smooth, and he murmurs with dreamy lips :

“ O Shulamite ! the lord am I
Of this realm ; the lands their tribute bring ;
I am Israel's and Judah's King,
But thou lovest me not, so I wither and die.”

13.

VAIN WISHES.

'Twas affinity of spirit
That our hearts together drew
By a mutual attraction
Which was stronger than we knew.

We were upright both, and honest,
Understood each other well :
What we meant, although unspoken,
From the merest glance could tell.

Ah, how ardent was my longing
To be always by your side,
In a *dolce far niente*
As your comrade true and tried !

Yes, my dearest wish was always
That we nevermore might part ;
And what pleased you I was ready
To perform with all my heart.

If you liked a thing I ate it,
And from what you loathed would turn,
And to smoke cigars, as you did,
Was determined I should learn ;

And with many a Polish story
That was sure to raise a smile,
In the Jewish tongue, untiring,
Would the passing hours beguile.

Now instead of yearning sadly
As an alien ill at ease,
On your happy hearth how gladly
I had sat and warmed my knees !

Golden wishes ! Airy bubbles !—
As my life is, brief and vain :—
From the floor where I am lying
I shall never rise again.

Pleasant hopes and golden wishes !
They are over now. Farewell !
Ah, that blow of mortal anguish
On my heart too sorely fell !

14.

THE ANNIVERSARY.

THEY will sing for me no masses,
Not a *kaddisch* will be said
In devout commemoration
Of the day my spirit fled.

But I shall not be forgotten ;
If the 'weather is serene,
Frau Matilda may go walking
On Monmartre with Pauline.

And some immortelles she'll carry,
On my grave the wreath she'll set,
And she'll sigh, " Pauvre homme !" and sadly
Drop a tear of soft regret.

And alas ! too high in Heaven
I shall be to give my sweet
Even a chair to sit and rest on,
Though she sways with weary feet.

Listen, plump and pretty darling ;
Home afoot you must not go.
You will see outside the gateway
Hackney carriages arow.

15.

MEETING AGAIN.

THE woodbine bower—a summer night—
By the window our seat as it used to be—
The moon arose with her balmy light—
But like ghosts from the grave were I and she.

Since we last sat thus—the scene the same—
Twelve years had passed : ah, time had sped !
The tender glow, the consuming flame,
Had sunk to ashes cold and dead.

The chattering woman raked about,
While I sat with hardly a word to say,
In those ashes of love so long gone out,
But revived no spark—they were cold and grey.

She told me a long and wearisome tale—
How her evil thoughts she had quelled by grace,
How nearly her virtue had yielded, frail—
I sat and stared with a stupid face.

As I galloped home, in the moonlight clear
The trees like so many ghosts flew by.
I heard strange voices calling drear—
But swiftly we rode, the dead and I.

16.

MISTRESS CARE.

WHEN Fortune smiled with sunny eyes,
How gaily danced the merry flies !
Of loving friends I had my fill,
Who shared with brotherly goodwill
My choicest meats, and spent
My ducats, well content.

My purse is empty, luck has changed ;
My loving friends are all estranged ;
Dim is the sunshine now and wan,
The dancing flies dispersed and gone.
When Fortune says good-bye,
Farewell to friend and fly.

And Care has come, now summer's fled,
And waits and watches by my bed.
In her cap of black and camisole white
She sits and snuffs the livelong night.
How harshly the snuff-box closes !
How grimly the old thing dozes !

I often dream that Fortune gay
Has come again, and sweet young May ;
And that friends and flies disport in glee.
But the snuff-box creaks—God pity me !
The bubble bursts—and Care
Sits snuffing on her chair.

17.

TO THE ANGELS.

'Tis Thanatos, the dread indeed !
He comes upon a pale white steed ;
I know the trample of his horse ;
He comes to ravish me by force.
He has me now ! To leave Matilda so !—
My heart can scarce conceive such utter woe.

She who was wife and child in one
Will orphan, widow, be anon,
When to the shadowy land I pass !
Here, in this world alone, alas !
I leave my wife, my child, who lay
Trusting and true upon my heart, her stay.

Ye angels, hearken from on high !
O hear my pleading, hear my cry !
The wife I love protect and save,
When I am in the dreary grave.
Guard her, for she is like you, pure and fair ;
Take my poor child Matilda to your care !

By all the tears that, grieved in heaven,
To mortal sorrows ye have given,
By the dread word pronounced, when known,
In shuddering fear by priests alone,
By your own loveliness and mercy mild,
Ye angels, guard Matilda, guard my child !

18.

IN OCTOBER 1849.

THE blustering wind has fallen mild,
And things at home are as before.
Germania, great simple child,
Is happy with her Christmas-tree once more.

Domestic bliss we now pursue ;
All higher aims are bad, unstable ;
The bird of peace, the swallow true,
Is nesting as aforetime, in our gable.

On wood and stream, the storm forgot,
The moon serenely sheds her light.
But there are sounds—was that a shot ? —
The bullet may have hit some friend by night.

Some giddy pate may be their prize,
Who carried weapons ; for the cunning
Of wise old Flaccus some despise,
Who, beaten, boldly saved himself by running.

Crack ! Crack ! A pyrotechnic show
Perhaps they give in Gœthe's honour ;
Or Sontag—lyre of long ago—
Poor ghost, is having rockets showered upon her.

And Liszt, our Franz, appears again ;
He is not stark and lying red
On some Hungarian battle-plain ;
Russians and Croats could not strike him dead.

Freedom's last bulwark fell, to death
Poor Hungary bleeds ; but Franz, good knight,
Still quite uninjured draws his breath,
His sabre in a drawer, safe out of sight.

Yes, Franz still lives, and, when he's old,
Great wonders will his grandsons hear
Of Hungary's wars: they will be told,
 " 'Twas thus I lay and smote them without fear!"

At Hungary's name it were no wonder
If—such a surging sea's below—
My German waistcoat burst asunder:
 I seem to hear the welcoming trumpets blow!

And through my soul there thrills again
The grand old saga, dim but cherished:
The iron, savage, martial strain—
 The song of how the Nibelungs fell and perished.

The lot of heroes is the same,
 Unchanged the tales of arms victorious;
All that is altered is the name;
 Still, in our time, we have our "Heroes Glorious."

Their doom's the same; however bold
And proud and free the banners fly,
To-day the hero, as of old,
 To brutish force at last must yield, and die.

Your doom the ox and bear combined
Have, with their double strength, assured;
You fell, but, Magyar, never mind!—
 A deeper shame than yours we have endured.

By honest means your power they broke,—
Quite noble beasts both bears and kine;
But we have come beneath the yoke
Of wolves, and common curs and filthy swine.

They howl and bark and grunt; their smell
Alone I find a foul offence.
But Poet, hush! You are not well;
You'll hold your tongue if you have any sense.

19.

HELENA.

THOU hast summoned me forth from the dusty
grave,
For thy will is a magic spell;
In my soul thou hast kindled the flame of love,
And the flame thou canst not quell.

O press thy mouth upon my mouth!
I will drink thy soul away.
Ah, mortal breath is divine! The dead
Have a thirst that none can stay.

20.

A BAD DREAM.

I DREAMED that I was young and glad, and staying
At the old country-house which used to stand
High on the mountain ledge, and I was playing
And racing with Ottilia hand in hand.

How finely formed the little thing! How sweetly
Her sea-green eyes bewitch me with their glance!
She stands on her small feet so firm and neatly—
A type of strength combined with elegance.

Her voice, too, rings so truly and sincerely,
And all she says so wise is and discreet!
One sees the bottom of her soul quite clearly,
Her little mouth is like a rosebud sweet.

What steals upon me is not lovers' sadness,
I do not rave, or lose my head for bliss;
Her being moves me with a strange soft gladness,
And, trembling secretly, her hand I kiss.

I plucked a lily white for her to carry,
And gave it, and spoke out with hardihood:
"Ottilia, be my wife; oh, let us marry,
That I may be as blest as you, and good!"

But what she answered I shall never know now,
For suddenly I woke—and I was here,
A poor sick man upon his bed laid low now,
And who has lain thus pining many a year.

21.

IT GOES OUT.

THE curtain falls upon the play,
And the spectators pass away.
Whether the piece was well received?
I heard applause, as I believed;
A public of quite high repute
The poet praised in generous measure;
But now the house is dim and mute,
And vanished are the lights and pleasure.

But hark! From somewhere near the stage
There sounds a feeble note and thin.
Perhaps some chord outworn with age
Has snapped in some old violin.
In the parterre that was so gay
The dreary rats are now at play;
And rancid oil pollutes the whole.
One single candle burns in doubt:
It hisses, groans, despairs, goes out.
That last poor candle was my soul.

22.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

Now my life is almost spent
I will make my testament,
Showering gifts as Christians ought ;
Not a foe shall be forgot.

To my adversaries, highly
Thought of people, I bequeath
All the maladies that seethe
In this body tortured vilely.

Ye shall be my heirs, and languish
With this colic, know the anguish
Of these Prussian piles perfidious,
And this strangury as hideous.

Yes, my cramp, convulsions even,
Ye shall have ; my salivation
And my spinal inflammation :
Each and all, the gift of Heaven.

And the codicil shall run :
May the Lord, when you are rotten
Cause your name to be forgotten,
And to perish 'neath the sun.

23.

ENFANT PERDU.

For thirty years, in Freedom's struggle glorious,
I've taken part in many a hope forlorn.
I knew that I could never be victorious,
But wounded must return, and battle-worn.

I waked by day and night—there was no sleeping
For me, as for the others in the tent—
(Their snores, good lads, did something toward keeping
Slumber away, maybe, when I was spent).

I have known terror in those watches weary—
(For only fools have never been afraid)—
Then I would whistle mocking tunes and cheery,
Until the fear that haunted me was laid.

Yes, I have stood on guard, alert and steady,
And, if a doubtful character was seen,
Have aimed, and the hot bullet that was ready
Has found in his vile paunch a billet mean.

Yet all the same, one cannot but confess it,
Such scurvy fellows often understood
The art of shooting—vain 'twere to suppress it—
My wounds are gaping—ebbing is my blood.

Wide gape the wounds—the vacant post's bespoken !

One falls, another fills his place and part.

But I have fallen unvanquished—sword unbroken—

The only thing that's broken is my heart.

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TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND, M.A., F.R.L.S.
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